



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

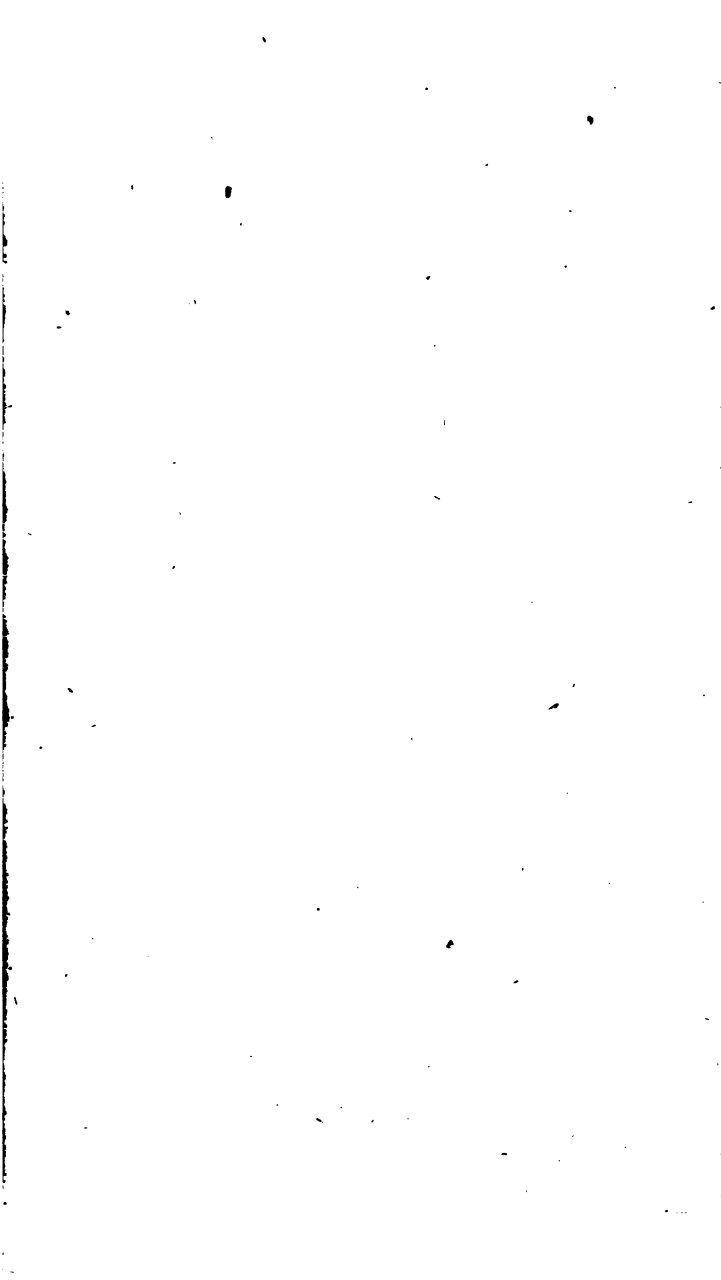
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

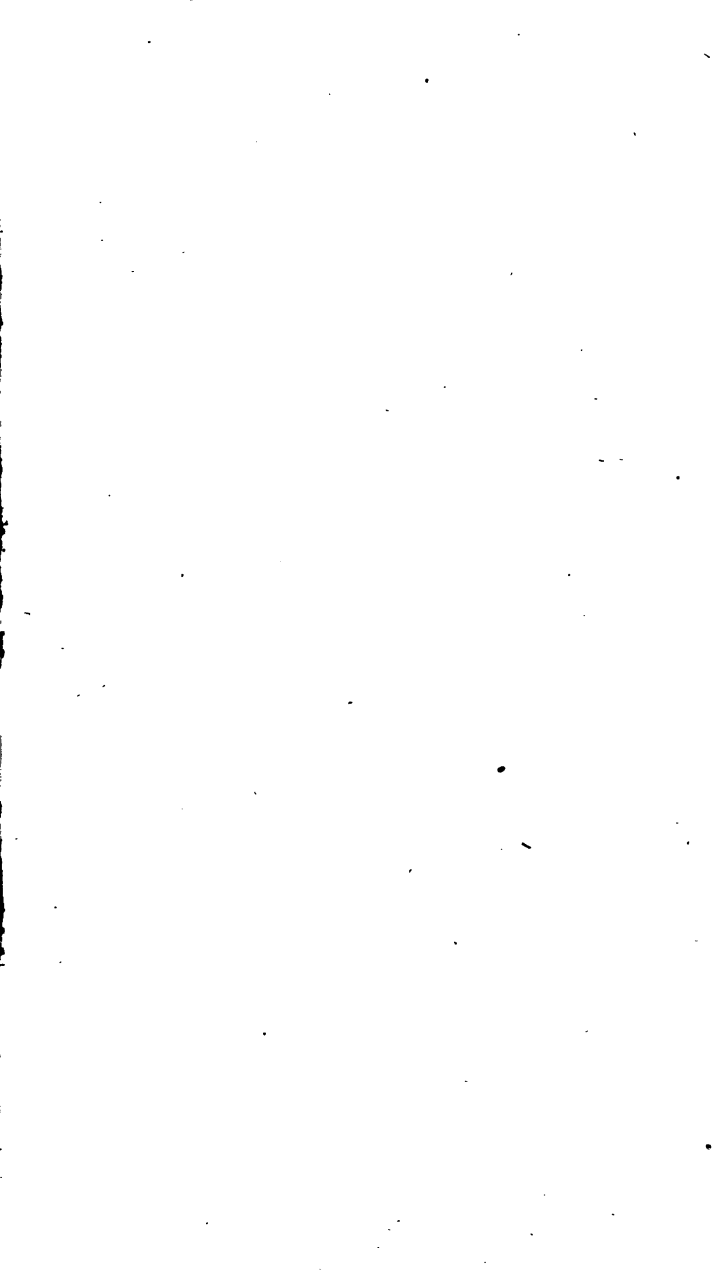
4 m 23.3,



Margaret Smith Burges.









A N N A,

OR,

MEMOIRS OF A WELCH HEIRESS.

Agnes Maria
BY MRS. BENNETT,

AUTHOR OF
ELLEN COUNTESS OF CASTLE HOWELL,
&c. &c.

FOURTH EDITION.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,
AT THE
Minerva-press,
LEADENHALL-STREET.

M.DCC.XCVI.

828

B469am

1796

V.1

A N N A.

CHAPTER I.

A SCENE OF MORTALITY.

THE latter end of September, Mrs. Clarke, a widow woman, whose narrow circumstances obliged her to let lodgings, was so fortunate (as she then termed it) to have her apartments taken at her own price by a very good-looking middle-aged man; who, to obviate any doubts that she might have respecting his being a stranger, advanced a month's rent, and, preparing her to receive a sick woman and a child, desired her to provide a nurse for the former, as she engaged to superintend

all the attendance he wished for himself and the latter: and, having given her a couple of guineas to lay out in what necessaries might be immediately wanting, left her to fetch the woman and child.

The stranger had dropped no hint that the person, who was to occupy the apartments, was his wife, neither had he said she was not so.—Mrs. Clarke was scrupulous and particular in her own principles; but her lodgings were empty; they had, unluckily, been so all the summer; the winter was approaching; during that season she had seldom tenants for them, and necessity rendered her less inquisitive than, in more easy circumstances, she would have been; she was prevented asking questions, by the fear of having them answered in a way that would oblige her to forego an advantage she could not well do without.

In two hours, from the time he left her, a hackney-coach set down at her door an elderly woman in the last stage of a consumption, a pretty little girl of three or four years old, a portmanteau, a small trunk,

trunk, and the aforesaid gentleman. Luckily, Mrs. Clarke was a woman who made a point of fulfilling her engagements; for, the assiduity, with which she had prepared their rooms and procured a nurse, was rendered necessary by the extreme weakness of the poor invalid, who was directly got to bed, and a neighbouring apothecary summoned to her assistance.

The gentleman, with apparent concern, waited his decision; and, on a Physician's being recommended, begged (being, as he said, a stranger) the apothecary would give him the address of the most eminent; adding, that he would go himself to procure his immediate attendance. As soon as he was furnished with directions, he set off, in haste, accompanied by the apothecary, and Mrs. Clarke was beginning to scrape acquaintance with her little charge, when her attention was called to a bustle at her door, where she met, to her surprise and concern, Mr. Linton, the apothecary, returning, assisted by some accidental passengers, with the lifeless body of her new lodger: a vein

was immediately opened, but without effect: a fit of apoplexy had put a period to his existence, and he breathed no more.

The confusion, such an event raised in the house, reached the sick person; and, the nurse incautiously telling her the cause, it threw her into faintings, from which she never recovered sufficiently to speak to be understood, although she lived three days.

Among others, whose curiosity was excited by this awful and fatal circumstance, was the Rev. John Dalton, a popular preacher, belonging to a methodist conventicle in the neighbourhood.—Mrs. Clarke, as well as the nurse, were his constant hearers, and begged his prayers with the dying woman, who, a short time before she expired, gave proofs she was sensible of his sacred function and her own situation, by making signs to have the infant and trunk brought her, both which she put into his hands, and, appearing then more composed and resigned, was, in a few moments, released out of her pain.

The trunk appeared heavy enough to quiet, in some measure, the apprehensions of the reverend teacher; otherwise, the sacred bequest, and the solemn manner in which it was made, would not have been the most acceptable thing in the world to him.—Poor Mrs. Clarke, as soon as she found she could not disturb the dying woman, began loudly to lament herself at having a couple of people to bury, of whose names, connections, and even country, she was ignorant, and whose baggage was too trifling to answer the funeral expences, which would half ruin her to defray, having a very small pension, as widow of a carpenter of a man of war, and what she could make of her lodgings, to support herself and daughter, whom she had put apprentice to a millener.

This reflection suggested the idea of searching the pockets of both the deceased; in the man's was found a gold watch and chain with three seals, viz. a coat of arms, a crest, and a cipher, (H. T.) seven guineas, some silver, and a small key, which Dalton

took, as belonging to the trunk ; and, having half opened it, he shut it again immediately, declaring it was full of old papers, which he would look over when he got home, and, as it had pleased the Lord thus signally to deprive the innocent child of its natural friends, he would take the present care of her himself.

To be sure, he had a large family of his own, and hard enough he found it to support them ; but what of that ? Deeds of charity, like those of virtue, were their own reward ; nay, he would go farther, he would take what effects there were, and pay all the expences of their respective funerals, and every other that was already incurred : if there were enough to reimburse him it would be well ; if not, God would pay him.—The women were lost in admiration of his piety and charity ; when, to avoid the censures of evil-minded people, he directed them to take an inventory of the things, the property of the defunct : a prudent precaution, though not absolutely necessary, for the
witnesses

witnesſes were well acquainted, from memory, with every particular, but that which he ſaid required none, viz. the ſmall trunk, which he ſuffered not to go out of his own hands.

Having given what farther directions he thought proper, a coach was ordered, in which he conveyed the child, the trunk, and himſelf, to his own habitation.

When Mr. Dalton ſaid he had a large family of his own, he had (which was not always the caſe) ſpoken the truth; having a fat, handſome, wife, five daughters, and two ſons, with a ſmall income; ſo that, when he got home, Mrs. Dalton was not over ſenſible of the neceſſity there was for this extraordinary exertion of a charitable diſpoſition in her huſband. To ſay the truth, though nobody could preach it better, or enforce it with ſtronger argument, there was very little of that meek-eyed virtue in the doctor's (as he was called) practice. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, that Mrs. Dalton was both angry and ſurpriſed at this firſt inſtance of that amiable virtue.

He soon, however, contrived to reconcile her to the trouble and expence of this little addition to her family; and when, after communing with her husband, she looked at the sweet babe, then asleep, it was so lovely, and had something so genteel, so much above the common run-of children, about it, not to feel for its distress was impossible; she had children of her own, and God knew how soon she might be taken from them, she would, therefore, certainly be a mother to the dear innocent.—It was, accordingly, put to bed, after which Mr. Dalton and his rib, whether from the consciousness of a right act, or from any other pleasing occurrence of the day, spent the remainder of the evening in high good humour with each other, adding to their usual draught of porter a basin of warm punch, and retired to rest with better spirits than they had ever before done.

The next morning our little heroine was introduced, in a very engaging light, to her new acquaintance; she had been long immured, without room to exercise, or play-fellows

fellows to amuse her. Dalton's children were three of them of an age to be her companions, and they had a large garden to range in: delighted with such a pleasing change she prattled and caressed them by turns, exhibiting, in her lively sallies, great good humour, and visible traces of having received her first impressions in genteel life.

Unconscious of the loss she had sustained, and intoxicated with the dolls and toys (though not very costly ones) which the Dalton's possessed, she thought of nothing else till bed-time; then a hearty cry after papa and nurse for some time rendered her fretful, but sleep soon silenced her little sorrow: for some days, bed-time was her hour of affliction; but, that wearing off by degrees, all memory of the past was lost, nor could they, by any exertion in their power, draw from her the surname of her parents; her own, she told them, was Anna; if she wanted any thing, it was "give it Anna," or "let Anna have it," but, her ideas were so infantine, they could learn nothing from her innocent talk that

could lead to any discovery of where she came from or whom she belonged to. As she never mentioned a mother, they concluded the woman who died to be her nurse, and the man her father, both of whom were decently interred; and, in a week after, an advertisement was inserted in *one* morning paper, by Mr. Dalton, in the following terms:

“Whereas, on the 29th day of September, a man and woman took a lodging in the Hampstead road, where the man died of an apoplectic fit the same day, and the woman of the fright occasioned by it, leaving a female child: whoever are related to the said man or woman, and will take the child away, may apply to the Rev. John Dalton, Tottenham-court-road.”

My reader may, perhaps, conceive the contents of the trunk might have put the parson in a surer method of finding whom the orphan belonged to, but in that he would be deceived, for it contained no sort of information of the kind, or, indeed, any other
but

but what he fully resolved to conceal with the most guarded secrecy, and that was the exact sum of fourteen hundred guineas, in fourteen small canvass bags, all marked 100 alike, save that, in one, besides the money, were three valuable diamond rings, and a lock of hair folded up in lawn paper, with "My ever-dear Anna's, H. T." written upon it.

I wish I could, with truth, say these things were concealed with a laudable intention of restoring them, or that his inquiries after the child's original were made with that earnestness it would have been had those valuables not been in Dalton's possession.—But I fear the reverse will be proved! the temptation was strong, the tempted weak! avarice is a dangerous, it is an encroaching, vice!—— Dalton had not any immediate intention of converting to his own use the money; but, when once the glittering bait was secure in his possession, and no witness or person to demand it but an innocent child, (who could not now possibly want it,) he overcame the difficulty of being just, when justice would have deprived him of fourteen hundred

B 6

guineas;

guineas ; and, arguments being ready to corroborate partial ideas, this pair persuaded themselves, in retaining money they could, at any time, restore, they were not injuring any other person, while they were materially benefiting their own family.

CHAPTER II.

A Methodist Preacher.

MR. John Dalton, whom I have introduced so early to my readers, will cut so considerable a figure in the succeeding pages, that I think it necessary they should know something of the person with whom they are likely to be more intimately acquainted.

He was the son of a journeyman carpenter, in a large town in South Wales,
and,

and, being a boy of an active turn, was admitted into a free grammar-school by the preceptor, for the double purpose of cleaning his shoes and sweeping the school-room: here he picked up a smattering of dead languages, and, by a servile attention to the son of a dignified clergyman, afterwards bishop of the diocese, got so much into his good graces, that, by his means, he was, to the surprise of every body who knew him, ordained.

A late celebrated methodist teacher, was it is known, fond of procuring men, for his mission, who were in orders; and Dalton, considering, perhaps, a prophet has no honour in his own country, where indeed, he had not the least prospect of even a cure, pleaded a call of the spirit, and, insisting under his banner, was ordered to a town in the west of England; there he succeeded so well as to get a good livelihood, and so ingratiated himself into the favour of a widow of good circumstances, that, after various considerations, she waved her first intentions, of taking the good man
for

for her bodily, as well as spiritual, guide, in favour of her daughter, a pretty, innocent, girl of sixteen, with a thousand pounds left by her father; indeed, some people affirm, that the old lady's having her income during her widowhood only was the reason the doctor did such violence to his spiritual feelings as to accept for his help-mate, a young creature, who had not yet professed the religion of which he was so fervent a supporter, when it was well known he might have contracted himself to a holy matron, whose mornings, evenings, and even midnights, were often devoted to the pious service of the church.

But, whatever were his inducements, the simple fact was as I have related it: he married the young woman with the approbation of her mother. He was not, however, equally fortunate with the few inhabitants of the place, who did not profess methodism, and who chose to testify their dislike of the old lady's disposal of her handsome daughter, by taking some liberties with her house and windows not quite within
the

the letter of the law. Nor were they more ceremonious with the doctor, who had the mortification of seeing the tabernacle demolished, and of being obliged to quit, under cover of the night, his friends and fellow-sufferers.

A thousand pounds in his pocket, and a handsome wife in his hand, were not sins of so crying a nature in the eyes of his chief in London as they had been in those of the ignorant west-country folks. He found himself not worse received for the persecution he had undergone, and had soon reason to rejoice at an event which established him in one of the first meetings in London.

Here, then, the powers of Dalton had their full scope.—To strong voice, a primitive look, a lank thin person, and a large wig, he added the cunning and cant of an itinerant preacher; and, with those qualifications, he soon became the favourite of all the old women and maids who frequented his conventicle.—His wife, ignorant and uninformed, caught the prejudices, as well as manners,

manners, of those she associated with: she thought her husband the very saint he professed himself, bred every year, grew fat and indolent, despising with her lips the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, whilst a gay gown or a smart cap could, at any time, steal her attention from her prayers; and the joy of her heart was good eating and drinking; in this she was very often indulged by the continual entertainments to which they were invited by the disciples of her husband.

She was a good mother, a faithful wife, and, considering the company she kept, a sincere friend: harmless and inoffensive by nature, she was taught to believe it meritorious, if her right cheek was smitten by her husband to turn to him her left also: his will was the law of her actions; and, as his darling pursuit was money, and his constant theme to her the distress she and her family would be exposed to if he died before her, she imperceptibly imbibed an avaricious turn, conformable to his disposition but not her own.

The

The thousand pounds, her fortune, had been no otherwise changed than in the transfer from the name of her guardians to his ; and most years he contrived, what with collections and presents, to make both ends meet without touching the interest.

Indeed his talents and industry were mutually calculated to make the most of every possible advantage that offered ; and, while his hearers fancied they were forwarding their own salvation by their liberality to the preacher, he was most assiduously lying in wait for every avenue to their consciences that could be turned to his own interest.

—If a tailor were seized with a devout fit, he was soon given to understand what a disgrace to the congregation it was to see their minister in so shabby a coat ; did a hosier invite him to dinner, ten to one but the reverend visitor had holes visibly coaxed in his stockings ; and a linen-draper was sure to see him in a dirty shirt, because his stock was too small to last round a week's wash ; then his large family was a constant topic, and his small income ever
in

in high lamentation against quarter-day. Many and various were the shifts and inventions of this good man to lay his flock under contribution, in which he was so successful, that he has been known to be selling in one part of the town what he had begged in the other; constantly saying, "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord!"

But, notwithstanding so divine a tenet, which was continually on his lips, nothing could be farther from his heart than the idea that preaching and practice should go together. At the time our little heroine was thrown in his way, he was wavering between two points, each of them leading to the grand concern of his life—*money*.

A builder, who had taken a large space of ground, where he had engaged to erect several houses, had laid the foundation of a chapel, which he offered to Dalton on consideration of his advancing one thousand pounds towards finishing it, and to share the profits between them.

The

The plan was flattering, and the harvest, if it succeeded, immense.—He calculated the number it would hold, the price of the tickets for the different pews, with the profits of the burials and the visitations, and his heart bounded at the sum it would produce. On the other hand, if it should not succeed, what would become of his thousand pounds sunk in the building, where both principal and interest would be lost ?

In such a dilemma any prudent man would be cautious, but Dalton was miserable.—Elated with the hope of obtaining riches, he no sooner resolved on the partnership, than the fear of parting with his money rent his very soul, and, under the dominion of that fear, the instant he determined to keep it in safety where it was, the chapel, finished, consecrated, and filled, presented itself, with all its profits and emoluments, to his tortured imagination.

At this critical period, chance, which he misnamed Providence, put it in his power to gratify his wishes, and preserve, untouched, his own property ; one only difficulty started,

started, should the child be owned and the money claimed:—well, if either should happen, how could it be proved he had them? The person who had intrusted them to him was no longer capable of giving positive evidence, and the glorious uncertainty of the law admitted not, in pecuniary matters, of a circumstantial one: he could not then be obliged to pay the money till quite convenient to himself; and, when it was, he assured his wife he would refund it without being obliged: this point being settled, the money was advanced to the builder, viz. one thousand pounds, the remainder put into the Bank, and Dalton left happy in the accomplishment of more than he had dared to wish for.

CHAPTER III.

The Methodist continued.

DALTON had many reasons for enjoining secrecy to the builder; and, in order to be out of the way of impertinent inquirers, (one of which was Mrs. Clarke, who felt herself so much interested in the fate of our orphan, that she let not a day pass without visiting her, nor ever went but with some little purchase of cakes, fruits, or toys,) he resolved to move his residence, as the keeping alive the remembrance of the event, that had been in its consequences so pleasing to him, was, of all things, what he least desired.

Mrs. Clarke he could not affront, for she had more claims than one on his civility; poor and necessitous as were her circumstances, she was always very liberal to him;

him ; and, whenever her purse would afford a bit of any thing better than common, it was shared with Mrs. Dalton.

Although a religious woman, she was far from being offensively strict in her actions or conversation ; and so certain was Dalton of the integrity of her disposition, that he ventured to indulge himself at her house in a luxury he could not, for fear of discovery, enjoy at his own. All his prayers and self-denials had not been able to conquer a love which he, in his early days, had imbibed for a game of whist, it had been endeared to him when a school-boy by supplying his pocket, and, as he had played with tolerable success, the picking up of a few pence rendered it still a desirable amusement : for this gratification, he relaxed a little with his staunch friend, Mrs. Clarke, who, conceiving no sin in playing a game of cards, was the readier to acquit him of any. Harmless as it was, he was in continual dread of discovery ; and all his views now centering in the dear chapel, he resolved to move near it, and, by that means,
drop

drop his friend, and be on the spot, an eye-witness to the rapidity of its improvements.

An inducement to this step soon after occurred, as unwelcome as unexpected. Cautious as he had been in the chapel-scheme, it somehow or other transpired, and reached the ears of his employer, whose good will towards his deputies, so far from following the prosperous only, always decreased as they rose in the estimation of their respective congregations.

He had seen with the eye of jealousy the crowds that attended Dalton's meeting, and, dreading the growing popularity of a rival, so eligibly situated as the new chapel promised, contrived to pick a religious quarrel with our adventurer; and, having proved before a select vestry, that the reverend John Dalton had rendered himself unworthy of the rank he held in their sect, by profanely playing three games at cards in the house of Martha Clarke, he was dismissed the society in disgrace; and this sentence was read publicly in all the devout

vout assemblies in the kingdom, as well as that of his associate, Mrs. Clarke, who, to her infinite sorrow, was excommunicated.

This terrible blow was followed by one much more so.—The builder, to whom he advanced the thousand pounds, decamped, without performing any part of his contract, leaving the chapel unfinished, and, what was still worse, without giving the poor parson a clear title to the premises, thereby putting it out of his power (had he been so inclined) to employ another person to complete what the first had so inauspiciously begun.

It has been said, if, in the worst of misfortunes, we were to seek consolation from reason we should feel a relief, in some shape or other, from the very evil that afflicts us.

—Thus Mr. Dalton, and consequently his wife, found comfort in reflecting it was not their own money they had lost; they were yet four hundred guineas in pocket: nor was this all, for a jolly good-humoured clergyman of the Church of England, more benevolent than strict, and more compassionate

sionate than pious, hearing of Dalton's misfortune, and that he had a very large family, who were involved in their father's distress, after some few inquiries into his morals and capability, engaged him as his curate, in a populous part of the town, at a settled salary of sixty pounds per annum, and sent his eldest boy to Christ's Hospital.

This event was considered by the Daltons as the greatest piece of good fortune; and, as they were now to move in a more eligible sphere, a hundred pounds more were expended in furniture, clothes, and other necessaries, so that the traces of the poor methodist parson were no longer seen in their appearance.

He was then treated with more respect by the world in general; and as he kept to the kind of preaching he was accustomed to, it brought a full congregation to the church where he officiated. His deficiency in point of learning and abilities appeared to be made up by his religious zeal, and recommended him to the parishioners, to whom he pleaded his poverty, and a large

family, in a genteeler style, but with the same success he had before done among the more scrupulous sect from whom he had been discharged with such marks of holy abhorrence.

CHAPTER IV.

An Accident.

WHEN Mrs Dalton was settled in her new habitation, her intended inquiries after a school for her daughters were anticipated by the sight of a large board, signifying in gilt letters, over the side-door of a chandler's shop, that "*Yong ladeys were bedicated here*; with a "*N. B. dancing tout*;" and the Miss Daltons being now unquestionably young ladies, they, together with Anna, were sent to this seminary of education,

ducation, which consisted in spelling badly words of two syllables, with needlework in proportion: as to dancing it was neither agreeable to Dalton's professions or suitable to his finances to have his children learn it, though Anna was continually holding out her frock and making courtesies to tempt him. Her lively genius gave early specimens of what it was capable of, compassing what learning the school afforded with incredible rapidity: ever first at book and work, she was likewise first at play: and here, since an opportunity of speaking to their good name will seldom offer, let me do justice to Mr. Dalton and his wife, who shewed not the least partiality to their own children, but treated the little orphan with equal tenderness, care, and affection, which were returned by her with the same fondness they experienced from their own.

Anna continued here, without any material incident either to them or her, three years, improving every day. She was a fine chubby little girl when they took her first, but she then began to promise some-

thing more; her features were regular and handsome, her complexion clear, and her countenance so inexpressibly pleasing, that, though a great romp, she was a general favourite, particularly with the governess, as the person was called who received her sixpence every Monday. Her sampler was exhibited as a pattern of good work, and, with what very poor instructions it was in the woman's power to give her, she read with such ease and propriety as astonished both Dalton and his wife.

At this period an accident happened that gave a new turn to the fortune of my heroine.—Running with more agility than care across the street from school, which she had often done, without a guide, her foot slipped, and, a gentleman's coach driving furiously along, the coachman could not pull in his horses time enough to prevent her being thrown down and receiving several violent bruises. The lady who was in the carriage was possessed of great good nature and humanity: she expressed the strongest concern for the child; attended it

home,

home, where she continued in the most tender anxiety, till a surgeon had pronounced it out of danger, when she left her with five guineas and an assurance of calling next day: she was as good as her word, and continued to see the little angel (as she called her) every morning till she was entirely recovered from the ill effects of her fall.

Mrs. Melmoth (for that was the lady's name) found in the uncommon loveliness of Anna, something that attracted her attention when humanity had no farther plea to offer, and her partiality for the charming child raised the curiosity of her husband, at whose request she solicited Mr. Dalton's leave to carry her home to dinner, promising to return her in the evening.

Propitious to my heroine was this visit; her engaging innocence, added to that nameless something every body feels but none can describe in an ingenuous countenance, together with the very pertinent answers she made to the little questions put to her, endeared her to her new friends so excessively,

cessively, that it was with reluctance they restored her to the Dalton's as Mrs. Melmoth promised.

Again and again was she fetched and always returned loaded with finery and toys, insomuch that the little Daltons were equipt with her superfluities. A better school, at the desire of her benefactress, was sought for, and all the expences defrayed by her.

When the parliament broke up, Mrs. Melmoth, though a very fine lady, declared her chief regret at leaving London was parting from her Anna; and, embracing her, with tears asked if she would come to see her.

Dalton saw with unspeakable satisfaction the fondness of this lady for his ward, as there appeared a prospect of wholly getting rid of her; for, if Mrs. Melmoth took it into her head once to take her entirely under her protection, he should not only save her board, but, as in that case she would never want it, her fortune also.

He, therefore, seized the opportunity, while the benevolent heart of Mrs. Melmoth

Moth was melting in the warm effusions of affection she felt for Anna, of expatiating on the mercy of that Providence, who provided for the fatherless and destitute, and which had raised, in her, so kind a friend to an unhappy orphan.

The lady, who had always taken Anna for his daughter, was surprised at this speech, and called on him, as he expected, for a farther explanation. He told the tale with what reservations were necessary to his own interest, and what additions would most set off his own great charity, as well as work most effectually on the passions of his fair auditor.

Mrs. Melmoth felt herself exceedingly interested for her pet; and, had she followed the first motion of her own inclinations, would have immediately taken her under her protection; but a moment's thought bade her defer it till she had consulted her husband, from whose indulgence she had every reason to expect a coincidence with her wishes, but without whose approbation she never took any step of consequence;

her silence, and quitting town without the least hint of any such future intentions, made Dalton suppose the gudgeon had not bit.

Mr. Melmoth had set out for the Lodge (his seat in Wiltshire) two days before his lady's last visit to Anna, having a relation at Bath he wished to see in his way.—As soon as Mrs. Melmoth joined him, she made him acquainted with the piteous story of Anna, which was graced by her tears, and delivered in a language that stole to the heart of her husband, and, as they were not blessed with children, he anticipated her desires, and himself proposed taking the little orphan off the hands of the poor parson.

Mr. Melmoth was a fond, a gallant, and a polite, husband; to know what would make his wife happy, and to do it, (if in his power,) were one and the same thing to him.—When she withdrew to dress, he hastily snatched up a pen and wrote to Dalton as follows :

‘ SIR,

“ SIR,

“ Mrs. Melmoth is so charmed with
“ your Anna, and interested in the story
“ you were so good as to communicate
“ concerning her, she will not be happy
“ till we have her with us. A stage sets
“ out from the Saracen’s Head, Friday-
“ street, which passes our house; if no fe-
“ male passenger, who is known at the inn,
“ will take charge of her, you will be so
“ good as to commit her to the care of a
“ servant, and the sooner she sets off the
“ more you will oblige,

“ SIR,

“ Your humble servant,

“ WM. MELMOTH.”

“ MELMOTH-LODGE.”

This was dispatched as soon as sealed without taking any notice to Mrs. Melmoth of what he had done, as he formed to himself great pleasure in agreeably surprising her with the sight of her *protégée* before she knew he had sent for her.

Mr. Dalton was too much rejoiced at this now un hoped-for letter to defer an instant compliance with its contents: he immediately made the best of his way to the inn, where he was so lucky as to arrive, at the moment a lusty, red-faced, elderly, woman was taking her own place to go the next town beyond 'Squire Melmoth's, where she told him, few people were better known, she believed, than Dame Plunket. As this exoridium on herself was confirmed by the book-keeper, and, as he was in too great a hurry to get rid of his charge to be very nice about her company, he told her briefly he had a child to send to Mrs. Melmoth, and that the 'squire had ordered it to be put under the care of some female passenger.

On hearing this the countrywoman very readily undertook to deliver her at the Lodge: and, as the coach set off that evening, he returned in great haste to set Anna off also.—But, notwithstanding the good fortune of Anna was announced to her, with every possible assurance of the fine things she would have, and the happiness she

she would enjoy with the lady, who had been already so good to her, the idea of being taken away from Mrs. Dalton, to whom she so affectionately clung, that the good woman, reluctant before, was still more grieved at parting with her; and the leaving her young playmates and companions filled her little heart with unspeakable anguish; she sobbed and wept, nor could all the encouraging things said by the whole family banish from her affectionate bosom her regret at leaving them.

Mrs. Dalton on her part besought her husband not to send her away; the expence of keeping such a good little creature was a trifle they should not be sensible of; she even ventured to throw out some hints of justice.—But I have before said his will was her law; unaccustomed to pay the least regard to her opinion, except (as indeed was most generally the case) it was exactly his own, it was not likely he should begin such an unnecessary piece of complaisance on an occasion where his own views and interest were so opposite to those principles

of humanity and good nature by which his wife was actuated in her request to detain the child.

His arguments were, that she was a mere woman and a great fool, that she did not know what was good for herself; and, which indeed was sufficient to end a much greater contest,—he knew best; *ergo*, the child must go.

CHAPTER V.

An agreeable Companion in a Stage-Coach.

MRS. Plunket was a notable bustling woman, who, having so far transgressed the rules of decency herself as to have been the mother of several children previous to her marriage with her late, or any other, husband, was for fixing the value of her own present virtuous life by a comparative view of the faults of others, and so indefatigable was she in her inquiries after the little blemishes of her neighbours, that not even the personal appearance of those children could remind her of the reproach she herself was liable to ; all memory of her own errors was swallowed up in the exact register of those of other people.

Her curiosity was insatiable ; she was a general enemy to unblemished fame, and
an

an universal retailer of every piece of scandal in the vicinity of her dwelling.—She was brought up in the late Mr. Melmoth's kitchen; who, being a widower some time before his death, was indolently indulgent to his servants, and had suffered this woman to continue in her place though her yearly excursions were but too visible even to him. The young 'squire not being quite so passive, she was discharged as soon as he came to the estate, and, the former Mrs. Plunket dying soon after, was made an honest woman by the reputed father of her children, who was likewise a dependent at the Lodge, and had saved money enough to set up a large country shop. But the indignity she had suffered in her dismissal from the Lodge she never forgot, though the scandal which occasioned it was not remembered; and, as long as she lived, if an opportunity offered of shewing her rancour towards the son of the man in whose service her husband had enriched himself, she failed not, as far as she dared, embracing it; she was therefore not only gratifying a common, but a malignant,

lignant, curiosity, by inquiring, with an affected good humour, into every particular about Anna.—“ Dear me, what a lovely “ child ! How could they part with it ! But “ she supposed they had more ! ”—On being told by Mrs. Dalton (who accompanied Anna to the inn) it was not her own.—“ Indeed ! what, a relation ? ” “ No,” answered Mrs. Dalton, “ it is an orphan “ Mrs. Melmoth has persuaded her husband to take off my hands.”

Another trial would have been made by the inquisitive dame to have gone farther into the history of her fellow-traveller, had not the stage-coachman informed her there was no time. She accordingly, by his assistance and the porter's, ascended into the vehicle, and little Anna was torn from the neck of Mrs. Dalton to follow her.

When the door shut out her friends, and the carriage moved on, the cries of the child not a little disturbed Mrs. Plunket, who, in an authoritative tone of voice, bid her cease her bawling, which (though soothed by two other women passengers) so frightened

frightened Anna, that if she continued weeping it was in silence, and, in a little while, the motion of the coach, with the late hour, threw her into a sound sleep, from which she awoke not till they stopped to breakfast.

She ate heartily, and, though she yet felt the parting with Mrs. Dalton, the face of nature, which she had never before beheld, in fields and woods, with every other scene so perfectly new, diverted her attention, but she still remembered with disgust and fear the commanding voice of Dame Plunket.—Being again seated in the coach, that active woman went to work, asking fifty questions.—As, where she lived? How old she was? Did she know Mrs. Melmoth and the 'squire?—How long was it since she had seen them?—The child, to her extreme mortification, either from dislike of the woman, a sudden fit of taciturnity, or cunning, preserved a most obstinate silence, It was in vain the dame sought by fair means or foul to obtain the longed-for intelligence; she could get nothing out of her; and when, at last, provoked

voked and enraged, she gave up the trial
——“ Augh ! it was a deep one, she would
“ warrant it !—Finely schooled and in-
“ structed !—But it would not do !—
“ People might shut their eyes !—None
“ were so blind as those that would not see !
“ —Madam Melmoth might carry her
“ head as high as she pleased and make a
“ parade that ill became her !—An orphan
“ indeed !—There were full enough of her
“ own blood she believed, if this were not
“ one of them, to take all and more than
“ the 'squire could spare !—For her part
“ she hated upstart quality !”

In this declaration she was joined by her fellow-travellers, who observed those were a sort of gentry most apt to give themselves airs. “ Airs indeed !” returned Dame Plunket, acquiring consequence in her own ideas from the attention of her companions, whose curiosity being excited, she condescended to give them the following history of 'Squire Melmoth and his family,

CHAPTER VI.

A Family Picture by a discarded Servant.

“ **W**HY, you be to know, my father
“ and mother lived with father and grand-
“ father of present 'squire; nay, for that
“ matter, I lived there myself, and Mr.
“ Plunket lived there too, from generation
“ to generation, as the saying is; but, new
“ lords, new laws!—Old master left this
“ young one three thousand pounds a year,
“ as good land as any in the country, and
“ all the young ladies fortun'd off, and
“ master Billy dead: but, Lord! he should
“ ha' been a parson; for, Lord help him!
“ a' is but half-starv'd: he is always a wri-
“ ting of books and verses, and one non-
“ sense or t'other; and then, to be sure,
“ instead of minding the justice-business, as
“ old 'squire did, and quorum meetings, he
“ must

“ must go to *Bedhemsted* a bathing, and fell
“ in with this fine madam wi’ never a far-
“ din of fortune, for indeed how should
“ she, her mother for fartin’s no better than
“ she should be, and she, *saving the law*,
“ a bit of a bastard; however, though she
“ had not a tester of her own, she could
“ spend the ’squire’s money fast enough;
“ there’s one estate gone already; all the
“ timber cut down, and the Lodge over
“ head and ears in debt, pulling down one
“ house, and putting up t’other, from
“ country to town, and racketing all over
“ the kingdom; then coming whoam, and
“ flaunting it away with as much finery on
“ her back as would keep a decent family
“ seven years; tired of her fine new house
“ now she has got it, while he, poor sap,
“ says as she says! as long as he can but be
“ shut up reading his *Canterbury tales* he
“ does not care, not he; and now here is
“ another whim, as thof’ there was not
“ poor children enow in *Somerfsetshire*.

“ I am fure Madam Ashby, the ’squire’s
“ sister, often and often said to me, Mrs.

“ Plunket,

“ Plunket, says she, these are sad doings
“ of my brother; and often and often I
“ goes to she, and drinks tea with she; but
“ I suppose t’other gewgaw thing would
“ break her neck afore her silence to a poor
“ body!——Not so poor netther,” bridling, “ thank God, I can pay every body
“ their own, and that’s a comfort!”

“ To be sure, so it is,” returned the two women, much obliged and delighted at the family-story of a parliment-man; which, notwithstanding some exaggerations, being in the main true, I have given my readers in the words of the all-intelligent Dame Plunket.

Mr. Melmoth, as she said, inherited his estate clear and unincumbered, and his lady had the double misfortune of being very poor and very handsome; she was young, lively, and agreeable, and, being bred up at a watering-place, had imbibed a taste for pleasure and expence, which her husband, so far from restraining, gave the most indulgent way to: his rent-roll he had not thought incumbent to shew her; and her thoughtlessness

thoughtlessness was but a copy of his own; so that the wonder would have been, if, after a few years tonish living on the part of the lady, they had not been pretty much involved: however, as they had no family, (and his ideas were really, as Mrs. Plunket said, taken up in trips to Parnassus,) they went on spending and mortgaging; few, very few, people caring how soon they were ruined, although their extravagance was the talk of the country.

Mrs. Plunket was not, as may be supposed, a favourite at the Lodge, whose owners were too good-natured to delight in scandal, and too much engaged to stand in need of such despicable auxiliaries to help them to kill time.

But she made it up at the houses of some of the other branches of the Melmoth family, who, having none of Mrs. Melmoth's misfortunes, (being rich, ugly, and ill-natured,) could not be cordially affectionate to her; in fine, they hated her, her dress, her taste, equipage, and liveries, and, above

bove all, her beauty rendered her at once an object of blame and envy.

Mrs. Plunket knew this too well to doubt whether a new instance of folly and expence would be acceptable, and therefore alighted, about two miles on the London side of the Lodge, at Mrs. Ashby's, to drop her news, pinning a paper to Anna, directed to Madam Melmoth at the Lodge: whether this was the invention of ignorance, or impudence, or both, I will not say; but the appearance it carried when the stage stopped at the 'squire's set the house in an uproar.

Mr. Melmoth and his lady were both out; the latter having written that day for Anna, and the former (though he did not expect her so soon) enjoying in idea the agreeable surprise he had prepared for her.

Dalton, ever prudent and considerate, observed to his wife, that as Anna was going to gentlefolks, a species of beings who seldom cared how their money went, and who certainly would soon buy her clothes to their own taste, it was needless to send any with her;—besides bundles might be lost or mislaid;

laid;—what things she did not take would fit Polly, and such an extravagant lady as Madam Melmoth would not thank them for saving her money.

Mrs. Dalton had no power, or indeed inclination, to oppose arguments which left her in possession of all the gay things given to her late ward; the child therefore was sent off, as I have related, with her whole wardrobe on her back.

The porter who answered the stage-coachman's ring at the gate, having no instruction from his master or mistress, was struck with astonishment at the sight of Anna, and the coachman's demand of the part of her fare left unpaid, as is usual, at the inn in town.—A child he had never heard of, so sent, and so directed, was indeed an extraordinary circumstance; and so much did it stagger him, that, before he would venture to receive our heroine within the gates, or pay her carriage, he summoned the housekeeper, who was followed by all the maids, and they by the footmen. The porter thought it was a trick to palm
the

the child on their master. "More likely
"to send him his own!" cried the cook.
"Like enough," answered a new footman
from madam's country, "you lived with
"his honour before he was married;"
adding, with a significant wink, "'hap,
"Peggy, you may know the mother?"—
An insinuation, however indirect or ob-
scure, that implies a doubt of the chastity
of a woman, who, conscious of not possess-
ing any of that troublesome virtue, is not
only never forgiven, but sure to be the ob-
ject of spight and rancour to the person so
offended.

Unluckily the private feelings of poor
Margaret were but too sore; she conse-
quently fired up;—"Why, how now,
"Mr. Powdermonkey, you have opened
"your mouth and said nothing," retorted
she with an inflamed face and raised voice.
"If the girl belonged to my master's side
"of the house she would not hardly have
"been sent packing:—no, no," bridling,
"we are no flinchers in 'Somerzeshire!
"The girl, I dare say, is Suffex; she is as
"like

“ like madam as she can stare ; and that I
“ will say if I loose my place !”

The honour of John, now doubly wounded by the reflection on his mistress and the stigma on his country, would not suffer him patiently to endure such an affront ; the majority of the servants being natives of the place, and of course siding with Margery, words ran high ; Mr. John being supported only by Mrs. Kitty, the lady’s maid, whose humble servant he was ; for Mrs. Elton, the housekeeper, (though mistress both of volubility and weight of argument,) had, in most matters, so much to say on both sides, that it was difficult, and indeed impossible, to tell which she was most partial to, at least till the opinion of her superiors were known.—In the midst of this clamour (every tongue going at once) it was in vain the coachman pressed to be discharged ; they had now almost gone beyond words ; yet one point seemed to be determined on by both the contending powers, which was, that the girl could not belong to them.

The coachman obstinately persisted in leaving her, and they as obstinately refused to take her in.

Poor Anna, terrified at so many strange faces, all bending their inauspicious, looks on her, screamed loudly (though she knew not why) as the coachman lifted her from the coach.—Mrs. Melmoth's maid, who was her great favourite, having caught a fever the beginning of the winter in London, had been sent home for the air before Anna's accident; she therefore knew nothing about her; and the coachman and servants, who had seen their mistress's fondness for her, were now out with them.

But, at this instant, it fortunately happened that our heroine had one friend and acquaintance at Melmoth-Lodge, to whose good offices she owed her not being turned into the street; this was an Italian greyhound, between whom and Anna there subsisted a mutual affection; her screams, in a voice the favourite animal well knew, no sooner reached him, than he ran out and rejoiced the heart of his little acquaintance,

ance, who, in her transports at seeing Ninon, forget all her tribulation, and thought only of caressing her very seasonable friend.

John took advantage of this circumstance, which discovered the child to be known to his mistress, and, putting her under the care of Mrs. Kitty, promised to relate all that had been said when his honour came home.

Thus the entrance of our heroine into Melmoth-Lodge, whose own disposition would have qualified her for the harbinger of peace and love, was hailed by the discord and ill-will of all its dependents.

Mrs. Elton would now fain have claimed some merit by her attention; but Mrs. Kitty told her, with a sneer, that, since the child was so like her mistress, she would keep her in the dressing-room till ordered to the contrary.

Tired with the long journey, and overpowered by sleep, long before Mrs. Melmoth returned, Anna was dead to the cares which, in a more advanced age, might have

robbed her of rest ; from this happy insensibility she was awakened by the fond and rapturous caresses of her benefactress, who, on retiring to her room a little fatigued, was throwing herself on the sofa, when she beheld, fast asleep and beautiful as an angel, her little pet.

Mr. Melmoth immediately explained the mystery, and received his wife's acknowledgement for his kind attention to her wishes ; then, turning again to the child, she almost smothered her with her embraces. Anna was at first rather peevish ; but, as soon as quite awake, she recollected Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth : her lively and innocent joy was as unbounded as sincere, and gave the highest gratification to her friends, who every moment felt themselves more interested for her, and more pleased at their own generous adoption of so amiable a child.

The next morning Mr. melmoth was made acquainted with the speeches of Margery and those of her fellow-servants who had sided with her : the 'squire, enraged
at

at their insolent reflections on his lady, insisted immediately on dismissing them ; and, though the little kindness Anna had received from Mr. John and Mrs. Kitty was purely in opposition to the other servants, it was amply rewarded, as well by the commendations of their master and mistress as by more substantial proofs of their approbation.

Every body knows that the transactions of a great house in the country become more or less the immediate concern of every individual within the reach of its influence or example, particularly on such an occasion as removing domestics, whose natural connexions are in the neighbourhood.—Mr. Melmoth's cook, dairy and house maids, his groom-helper, and undergardner, found themselves much injured by that gentleman's choosing to discharge them ; those injuries it was not necessary for them to keep secret ; they were therefore communicated first to their relations, next to the servants of the adjacent great houses, and, lastly, to the heads of those

great houses themselves, particularly to the relations of their late master: what were the candid comments of the neighbourhood of Melmoth-Lodge, on this extraordinary exertion of benevolence and charity in its owners, will be seen in the succeeding pages.

CHAPTER VII.

A Plan for female Education.

MRS. Melmoth, with the vivacity that generally attends the new undertakings of a fine lady living in the country, whose amusements are principally calculated rather to pass away time than enjoy it, now set about clothing our heroine; all her maids were employed; and a servant dispatched to Dame Plunket, at the next market-

ket-town, for the finest linen, and every other article her shop could supply of the best sort and highest price.

Mrs. Melmoth was no œconomist; the thing she was least acquainted with was the value of money; indeed but little of that article went through her hands, as the bills were paid by the steward; but there was a thing she was very clever at, and that was giving orders; Anna was therefore not only well stocked in all sorts of necessaries, but she abounded in superfluities; and the amount of Mrs. Plunket's bill was carefully conveyed to good Mrs. Ashby and her confidential friends.

As soon as she was equipped she became the constant companion of her patroness, who failed not to exhibit her to the best advantage, nor made any visits within a few miles of the Lodge unattended by her pet.

At Mrs. Ashby's, however, and at some other ladies in the neighbourhood, she found an unaccountable coldness and a restrained civility that astonished her; all common messages in the family-way were answered

with a hauteur and caprice that appeared to Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth truly ridiculous. Unconscious of giving them any cause for such an absurd change in their behaviour, they sought not an éclaircissement; their acquaintance with them declined gradually; and in a short time, all communication between them and the ladies of the family wholly ceased.

The circle of their visits being, by this means, contracted, our heroine excited more of their love and attention: an English governess was procured for her, whose character and abilities, for the station she filled, were attested by people of unquestionable honour; she was near forty, and had been so happy as to give satisfaction to different families twenty years of her life, that she had undertaken the arduous task of forming the minds and manners of young ladies; she did not profess to teach them the fluent use of the French tongue, though she spoke it herself, and understood its grammatical rudiments; but she was perfect mistress of the English, reading the best of
our

our authors with the greatest propriety and critical judgement; she was esteemed one of the finest needle-women of the age; wrote a clean, good, hand; understood music much better than she could execute, and was so nice a judge of time, that her attendance on her young pupils in their practice and lessons was of the most infinite advantage to them; she was perfectly neat in her person, and strictly virtuous in her conduct; her principles were uncorrupted by a single deviation from propriety, and her soul was untarnished by one mean or dishonest thought; her understanding and accomplishments qualified her for the society of the learned, while the simplicity of her manners and the goodness of her heart rendered her the beloved friend and companion of uninformed youth.—Such was the person to whose care the fortunate orphan was consigned at a very liberal salary.

Mr. Melmoth was, we have observed, a man of letters; he was, indeed, so fond of holding converse with the dead, that history, antient and modern, as well as poe-

try and the belles lettres, engrossed more of his time, when in the country, than was, perhaps, consistent with the warm affection he bore his wife, or the true politeness and attention a fine young woman may be thought to expect. When he left her alone for hours, preferring his dear books to her society, his heart smote him for it, and he seemed so conscious of a conduct, for which he felt self-condemned, (though he wanted the resolution to change it,) that he seized with avidity every opportunity of obliging or contributing to her amusement. When, therefore, he saw her busied and happy in the management of Anna, he gave every encouragement to what, if it may be called a weakness, was a very amiable one. Masters, at a very great expence, were procured to teach her music, dancing, and drawing; and Mr. Melmoth, farther to oblige his lady, not only consented to pay for the best instructions in those lines the country afforded, but condescended to superintend the literary part of her education himself; —a circumstance not more favourable
to

to the instructed than honourable to the instructor.

Mr. Melmoth, though a great scholar, despised pedantry ; his passion for the Greek and Latin was indulged only in his closet, and his admiration of the Muses confined to his secret interviews with them.

Few equalled him in learning or understanding ; in goodness he was exceeded by none ; he was well bred, polite, and humane : the instructions of such a man promised to be, and certainly were, of the greatest advantage to the orphan he patronised : the rapid progress she made in her studies soon rendered the task his goodness and humanity had imposed, an agreeable amusement. He pleased himself in observing how strictly she attended to the rules he laid down for the formation of her mind and manners ; he inspired her with the pride of virtue and the love of truth ; he taught her sentiments founded on the basis of the purest honour ; nor did he forget to encourage every spark of humanity and benevolence in her composition.

With a genius uncommonly lively, and talents to compass every thing, it is little wonder that in four years she became accomplished. Her summers were employed in her studies, the winter in repeating her exercises to her amiable governess, whose endeavours were to render her pupil worthy the continued favour of her benefactors. Anna really deserved the encomiums bestowed upon her: her rooms were adorned with her drawings; her works framed in the best apartments; and her taste and execution on the harpsicord were unequalled in that part of the world.

Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth, when the duties of parliament called him to London, left her with regret; and the pleasure they felt at her personal improvement, on their return to the country, was always increased by their observations of her mental ones; nor, young as she was, when taken under the protection of her present friends, did she forget her obligations to her early ones; she had been told her claims on the Daltons were not those of blood; and, suppo-

sing,

sing, in their care and affection, they had been actuated only by the soft bond of charity and compassion, her little heart expanded with grateful sensations; she constantly wrote to them from the time she could first join her letters; and, Mr. Melmoth's indulgence supplying her with the means, she was continually sending such presents as the country produced: pork, poultry, and game, they received in abundance from her, which being all carriage paid, and her letters franked, were advantages the doctor, on his part, never failed acknowledging, taking care to season his letters with spiritual instructions and religious exhortations.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Scheme for Reformation.

OUR heroine was now entered in the twelfth year of her age, when an event happened at Melmoth-Lodge, which protended at least a division of the affection of her benefactress. The lady's pregnancy was announced, to the inexpressible joy of Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth: an heir was the first wish of their hearts although the length of time, which had elapsed since their marriage without its being gratified, had, in some measure, reconciled them to what appeared the will of heaven; but their acquiescence was the effect of necessity, not choice. Their joy was however, not a little clouded by the growing embarrassment of their circumstances.

Mr.

Mr. Melmoth's total inattention to his affairs, and his blind indulgence to his wife in all the tonish extravagances of the age, which were every winter increasing, had so much involved his estate, that, before the birth of his child, one half of its inheritance was wholly alienated, and the other deeply mortgaged. The appearance of the little stranger added to the inquietude of its father : he had hitherto read and written while the profits of his acres were flying over the town or sinking into the purses of fraudulent dependents and licentious servants, but his Eliza brought with her new cares as well as new affections.

Mrs. Melmoth, who was brought up in a style of life which obliged her mother, while she set her daughter off to the best advantage in her power, to save it out of unseen necessities, having once attained the projected end, which was that of marrying well, thought the riches of a man with three thousand pounds a year were endless ; and, as her husband had never stinted her in whatever she chose to spend, it had not
been

been her inquiry or concern to know how his circumstances stood; nor did he soon awake her from the intoxicating reverie into which luxury and dissipation had lulled her: but when, before the summer was over, she gave him notice of a second blessing in the increase of his family, he, with great tenderness, informed her of the state of his finances. Her distress, which was great, joined to her fondness for her child, had at first nearly overpowered her reason. After some time, however, she entered with the greatest alacrity into a reform in their expences; the superfluous servants were discharged; all the carriages but the family-coach were laid down and the horses sold. Mrs. Melmoth would no more go to London; and Mr. Melmoth's principles setting him above the hopes of advantage to himself from the seat he held in the senate, he, to the surprise of his friends, resigned it. The town-house and furniture were disposed of; and, before the second child made its appearance, Mr. Melmoth, by having hapily got rid of so many incumbrances,

branches, had time to be both a family-man and an author, while Mrs. Melmoth commenced a mere country lady, who was very well satisfied now to find she had the use of her limbs.

Happily for our heroine she was not yet considered one of the superfluities it was necessary to discard, but her instructors were. Mrs. Barlow indeed was a very worthy woman; her they could not think of parting with, as their Eliza would soon be under her care; but music, dancing, and drawing, for Anna, were immediately given up. The time, usually devoted to those accomplishments, was filled by our heroine, very pleasurably to herself, in the nursery, with the children of her patroness, of whom she was excessively fond; and they, as is ever the case with infants, soon found by whom they were beloved. Thus we see (however the degeneracy of human nature may influence our maturer actions) gratitude is the first sensation observable in the attachments of young minds. Mrs. Barlow, notwithstanding her desire of being always with the children,

children, kept her, at stated times, to the constant repetition of those lessons which had been so expensive to Mr. Melmoth; she was indefatigable in her intreaties to Anna, not, by forgetting those valuable branches of female education, to give cause to her patrons to regret the time and money bestowed on her.

This good woman knew (what a dependent in a gentleman's family frequently does not) the reduced circumstances of her employers, and foresaw her young pupil could not long enjoy the sunshine she now experienced. The heart of Mrs. Barlow was the throne of humanity as well as the seat of virtue; she had heard the orphan state of Anna; and esteem, first founded on her amiable disposition and riveted by compassion, now endeared to her the child of misfortune much more than, with the same attractions, she would have done in happier circumstances. To make her an useful member of society, she now conceived the greatest service she could do the young creature she entirely loved, and therefore blended

ed her domestic needle-work with ornamental. Anna conquered every thing; she soon put Mrs. Melmoth out of conceit with her millener. No cap or hat pleased but those of Anna's making; the family needle-work went all through her hands, and she became, to the great pleasure of Mrs. Barlow and the gratification of her own pride, of real use to her benefactress.

About this time, when Anna was entering her fourteenth year, Colonel——
But what am I about? to introduce a hero at the end of a chapter! He deserves and shall have one to himself.

CHAPTER IX.

The Nabob.

COLONEL GORGET was a little man with a fallow complexion, small black eyes, Roman nose, and fine teeth, at this time about fifty years old, an immense favourite (as he himself was so good as to inform his acquaintance) of all the great men of the age, and of all the fine women of the late and present race of beauties. He was the son of a lady of good family, the widow of a near neighbour and a valued friend of the late Mr. Melmoth, who unfortunately, in an excursion to Bath, was prevailed on to give her hand to an Irish adventurer, equally destitute of property, character, or principle. After dissipating what fortune his bride was in possession of, he had the address to persuade her to give up her very considerable

confidereble jointure : and when that was spent, with a vast deal of tenderness and good humour, he gave her constant exercise for patience and resignation, by involving her alternately in those scenes of affluence and distress to which the life of a professed gamester is subject. Those exercises, which recalled with bitterness to her memory the calm and honourable life she lived with her first husband, so preyed on her spirits and injured her constitution, that she died unlamented, and almost unpitied, in her fortieth year, leaving one son by her second husband. Him on her death-bed, she recommended to the good Mr. Melmoth, whose regard for the relict of his friend outlived his displeasure at her folly and imprudence.

Mr. Gorget, whether from a confidence in this gentleman's goodness, a want of feeling for his son, poverty, or all these reasons united, soon after his lady's death, abandoned his child and left the kingdom. This was the kindest thing he could have done for young Gorget, for Mr. Melmoth
held

held the character of the father in such contempt and abhorrence, that it must have been on a very extraordinary occasion indeed he would meddle in the family-concerns of such a man; but the pitiable situation of the boy was no sooner made known to him, than he gave orders for furnishing him with proper necessaries, and put him to a reputable academy in the vicinity of the metropolis.

His genius was of that equivocal nature, that, though he could by no means be called a dunce, he never could be made a scholar; indeed he fenced, danced, and made verses in the *double entendre* style, better than any youth in the school. On a consultation between his patron and the master of the academy, that gentleman's first scheme of bringing him up to the church, where he had a presentation which he kept open for him, was laid aside on account of his trifling turn, and an ensigncy in a marching regiment procured, as more suitable to his talents and disposition. Here then, at the age of eighteen, we find him
beginning

beginning the world with two suits of regimentals, a dozen of shirts, and twenty guineas in his pocket.

As the pay of his commission was very inadequate to the expences attendant on the life of a man of mean pride and vicious pleasures, before he attained the age of twenty-two, although, by the interest of his friend, his income was enlarged by his advancing in rank from ensign to captain, he was involved in debt to every tradesman whose credulity rendered him the dupe of his plausible tales, as he constantly passed himself on them for the ward of Mr. Melmoth, and gave himself credit for a large fortune in that gentleman's hands.

With a disposition wherein cruelty and ingratitude were blended, he possessed all the powers necessary to rise in a polite circle; he had an infinity of small talk; fervility enough to render him invulnerable to common rebuffs; and patience to endure, with an affected complacence, the proud man's scorn; he had a sigh for the afflicted, an indignant glow for the oppressed, and
his

his softened voice professed universal charity for those who were griped by the hard hands of poverty and want.

Those were the outlines of a character, the most complicated and contemptible of the human species; for, though a sense of his narrow circumstances and small hopes taught him to practise those lessons of non-resistance and lip-deep humility, (for which indeed a late noble writer was his sanction,) his heart was the receptacle of vices, the reverse of those virtues of which he made so ostentatious a parade: he was proud, envious, unforgiving, and selfish; insomuch that, in no one voluntary act of his life, did he forget to conduct himself so as not to further his own interest; a common injurer of others, he never forgave one offered himself; to those, whose rank and fortune were either above or (if equal) independent of him, he was the very essence of humility, good humour, and complaisance; but, to those few whom Providence in its anger had placed under his insolent jurisdiction, his arrogance and cruelty were unbounded.

The

The punishments he inflicted on his fellow-creatures, unhappily under his command, for the slightest offence, held him up to the soldiery as an object of detestation, while he flattered himself, that, under the sanction of strict discipline, he veiled the real lust of power and the merciless disposition of his soul.

Could this man be suspected of announcing himself the champion of the softer passions! of valuing himself on his success while the gentle sex, whose nature shrinks from tyranny, and whose eyes involuntarily turn from the perpetrators of unfeeling barbarity! One would imagine it impossible! but his was, as I have said, a complicated character; it was, as far as one evil can be opposite to another, a contradictory one.

The experience a close and constant observation of the motives, as well as actions, of mankind gave him, added to his art and cunning, and these aided by a natural smoothness of speech and plausibility of manners, furnished him with powers to impose himself on his own sex, as a man void

of design or guilt. What then had a woman to arm herself with against his insidious snares ; his person, which was rather disgusting than otherwise, was indeed a kind of security against his attempts ; but, as if (which was not the case) he had been himself conscious of that defect, he was seldom known to begin his attack till he had wormed himself into the good opinion of the destined victim by a semblance of those virtues she loved, found out her weak side ; and where she was vulnerable : that point once gained, you, of my own sex, who have fallen, and you of the other, who, by admitting men of this stamp into your families, have lost, in the honour of the female, the pride and felicity of your lives, you go before me and know what follows.

Inconstancy is ever the companion of intrigue ; and when I have said it was this man's boast never to have had a connection with a woman who had not her reputation to loose, nor ever had honour or delicacy to conceal the lapse he himself had occasioned, it will exhibit him as an object

ject of envy to those (and many there are) of his own description, and inspire the good with horror, and the just with contempt.

CHAPTER X.

The Nabob continued.

CAPTAIN Gorget had begun and continued in such an expensive style, that, having worn out every expedient of imposing on the generosity of his patron, and finding the credulity of his tradesman beginning to give way to the calls of necessity, it became prudent, as he entered his twenty-fourth year, for him to vary the scene: he accordingly exchanged with an officer in ill health, who was ordered to India, and, who not only gave up superior rank, but presented

our hero with a sum of money sufficient to equip him for the voyage, and recommended him to the general-officer, who commanded the regiment, in terms which his ready wit, artful manners, and specious appearance, greatly improved; he insinuated himself with great ease into his commander's favour, whose open heart was by no means a match for this designer and his entertaining conversation procured him a general invitation to his table and house.

And here commenced his first public entrance into the annals of modern gallantry. —The general grew more pleased with his new officer every day :—he made him his aid-de-camp, and generously offered, on finding him in rather embarrassed circumstances, to lend him money sufficient to enable him to leave England out of debt. —In gratitude for this disinterested kindness, his friend's wife became the object of his cautious, but warm, pursuit.

The general was a *bon vivant*, he loved his bottle and enjoyed his friend; intoxication too often succeeded the exhilaration
of

of his spirits, and rendered him unfit for the bed of a delicate, beautiful, young wife, who, innocent as she was handsome, passed over with great good humour this one failing in a man, to whom she was married (though of a good family) without a fortune, and whose delight it was to support her in the most splendid and happy style.—No wish of her heart was ungratified; till the cruel spoiler came, who, ruthlessly taking advantage of the confidence reposed in him by the fond husband and the unsuspecting innocent wife, soon contrived to inspire her with those sentiments which banished honour and gratitude. In a word, after convincing her how unworthy of such a treasure the man was who could neglect it, and by exaggerating charms he swore would grace a diadem, his next step was to guide her attention from a man, much older than herself, who undervalued her beauty, to a lover, of her own age, who adored it.

Too easily he persuaded her to gratify a doting passion, so superior to the man's

whose name she bore;—one had already known decay, the other, never, never, could; it would be a ceaseless fund of bliss and rapture, over which time itself would have no power!—In an evil hour this lovely young creature, whose natural and acquired endowments might have ornamented any society, gave up her claim to all but the most abandoned!

Too much elated with his success, and too vain to conceal it, he made a subaltern, who hated him, the confident of his complicated treachery. Soon was the injured husband acquainted with his dishonour, and as soon furnished with proof sufficient to intitle him to a divorce. But, ah! how inadequate to the pangs of disappointed, ill-requited, love are the most ample retributions of the law!—It could punish the violator of his honour! it could separate him from his guilty wife!—But, could it take from him the memory of her beauty and innocence?—Could it shed oblivion's easing influence over his mind, and banish thence the charms he adored?—Could it lessen

lessen the reproaches of his own heart, for admitting, to his domestic circle, a man of the world, a declared pupil of the Chesterfield system?—Ah! no!—Nor law, nor revenge, nor even time, can subdue the anguish of such reflections.—The goodness of her heart, the elegance of her manners, recurring to his imagination, with the aggravation that one was corrupted, the other lost to him, and that for ever, if he carried on a prosecution: these, added to his unabated love for her person, spoke peace and forgiveness in the stern heart of the injured soldier.—Violent were his conflicts; but love, all-conquering love, overcame resentment!—He sent her word, if on the honour she once held sacred, she would give up every farther thought of her seducer, as they were going to leave the kingdom, where, long before their return, the matter would be forgotten, he would forgive and never mention the past.

Generous as was this offer, the ill-fated woman refused it.—Fond of her undoer, and in full confidence of the honour and

fidelity the noble captain had so often called the hosts of heaven to witness, and finding herself in a way that promised another link to an attachment she fondly hoped would end but with her life, she frankly owned her situation; acknowledged her husband's goodness; but avowed, the kneeling world should not tempt her to give up the best, the most amiable, of men, her dear captain.

Rage and resentment, in proportion to his love and disappointment, now filled the soul of the injured husband. In his first transports he vowed destruction to the villain that had undone him.

To extirpate him from the face of the earth would have been an act of common justice to mankind; but his friends prevailed on him to adopt that mode most adequate to the punishment and exposure of such a wretch. —The law was slower in its operations than revenge could well brook; but it was nevertheless sure. Ruin must attend his prosecution of a man, who had offended the laws of society, without friends or ability
to

to pay the penalty inflicted.—He, therefore, resigned his lucrative employment, the reward of many years hard service, to pursue, with unremitting vengeance, the unfortunate captain.

In the mean time the lady wrote her adorer word of what had passed between her and her husband, and pleased herself with the grateful raptures he would feel at so noble a proof of her regard as the voluntary sacrifice she made him; but, who can paint her grief and consternation, at receiving an answer full of the keenest reproaches for the ruin her nonsensical heroism must bring on him: he conjured her, on any terms, to make her peace with the general. The farce, he told her, was ended; for, settle it how she would, he could see her no more. His income was not only small but incumbered, and totally insufficient for the maintenance of the child she was so good as to promise him, but which, in his humble opinion, would be much better disposed of to the general.

E 5

neral. He concluded, by assuring her, he
was,

With the most inviolable regard,

Her most obliged,

Most gratefully devoted,

Humble servant,

PATRICK GORGET.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XI.

A Digression.

COULD here my humble pen, by painting the soul-rending consequence of a licentious amour, set one innocent heart on its guard against the destructive arts of those who delight in infamy, (the true meaning of the word gallantry,) I would esteem my fame immortal. Sacred should be that pen that could call on the daughters of purity to reflect on the sure consequences of a deviation from the calm paths of innocence and honour.

When your frailty is exposed, (passing over the agony of parents, the shame of children, the sorrow of friends, the disgrace of families, and the triumph of enemies,) reflect on the immediate consequence to yourselves!

You will find the doors of uncontaminated reputation barred against you, the eye of virtue turns from your glance, the cheek of modesty blushes at your approach, and the bosom of purity is no longer open to your caresses ; yet, the mortification you feel, at being shunned by the worthy women of your acquaintance, is nothing to that which is inflicted by the supercilious brows and keen reproach of those, who owe to their superior cunning, art, caution, or want of attractions, more, far more, than to any merit or virtue of their own, that they have not preceded you in the miserable lot you are doomed to bear.

Think, while men of honour and uprightness treat you with the most petrifying coldness and neglect, the worthless and abandoned will laugh at your pretensions to common respect, and conclude no insult can be offered to you : their right, to treat a woman of no character as their own impertinent whims direct, they aver to be indisputable. You must fly to hide your guilty head in solitude the most dreary to
bid

bid defiance to remorse, or associate with the most abandoned of both sexes !

Think, while you bear evils and are subject to insults innumerable, that your seducer raises his unblushing front, even in the presence of a sovereign, whose whole life is one lesson of moral rectitude.—Such is the blind imprudence of custom, it is no uncommon thing to see a man, who is under prosecution for the breach of every law of hospitality, scandalize the select parties of some of the first married pairs in the kingdom. He suffers no inconvenience, labours under no disgrace, is subject to no mortification, nor feels the slow and moving finger of pointed scorn ; it is rather a recommendation of him that he has ruined you.

This digression has no apology but the motive which is excited by the subject.

The agonies of death were not equal to those endured by the wretched Mrs. Summers on perusal of Gorget's letter.—Anguish and despair seized her sad heart ; she had not a friend, him she had injured only excepted, who would receive or console her !

her!—An outcast from society!—what should she do?—Could she take the advice of the callous captain, and carry pollution to the arms of a man of honour?—Could her heart, reeking with the wounds of unmanly cruelty, still beating in tenderness for the author of her shame and misery, now receive the forgiving love of the noble-minded Summers?—No! her soul disdained such meanness! it yet abhorred deceit!

In the course of her deliberations, she had time to reflect on the wretched fallacy and ruinous import of those arguments, by which she was undone.—She saw the monster without his cloathing! but how, alas! did that relieve her aching bosom? it rather aggravated than appeased her sorrows; which, strengthened by unavailing repentance, in a manner stupified her senses, and sunk her once-charming spirits into a state of nervous debility, while her fine figure was reduced to a mere skeleton.

She neither sought nor would accept pecuniary assistance, which the injured general

ral would have gladly offered, but lived on the sale of her clothes and a few trinkets, (having sent back the family jewels,) waiting, with a broken heart, the moment that would give to the world the offspring of guilt, the pledge of sorrow ! having removed herself to very private and humble lodgings in an obscure part of the city.

In the mean time the prosecution was carried on against the gallant captain with the utmost severity ; the damages laid were ten thousand pounds ; but the jury, as is customary, considering the circumstances of the delinquent, lowered it to one thousand, and his body was soon after seized and conveyed to prison for that sum.

Mr. Melmoth felt all the indignation with which a vitiated conduct could fill an honest heart ; but, the principal and most heinous parts of the seduction being concealed from him, he was, at length, after numberless solicitations, prevailed on to interest himself in the liberation of Captain Gorget, before the regiment, to which he belonged, embarked ; his mother's father and first husband

band having been members for the county several sessions.

His case, simply as a young man, who had suffered his passions to exceed his prudence, was laid before the magistrates at the assize, and a subscription opened by Mr. Melmoth, with a donation of one hundred guineas, which was so liberally followed, as to raise the damages given to the general. He, however, thirsted not after money; disappointed of the revenge, in which he hoped to be gratified by the perpetual imprisonment of the culprit, he ordered his attorney to pay the whole sum recovered to a public charity.

The captain, by those means freed from his confinement, was enabled to wing his flight to regions less unpropitious to the free indulgence of the passions. There, uninfluenced by the example of humanity in others, a stranger to the practice of it himself, unrestrained by the laws of a Christian people, and unawed by the fear of detection, he gave a loose to the excesses of his nature, and, adding avarice to the black catalogue

atalogue of his vices, became the terror of the inhabitants of the East. Cruelty and carnage were called bravery and justice and an unbounded greediness for their riches bore the respectable name of prudence.— His fame as a commander reached the country he had disgraced, and his coffers filled beyond his hopes.

With the accumulation of riches his desire for them increased: at length, it being whispered that now, there being very little wealth more in those hapless regions, in proportion to the rapacity of its various claimants, and that, the country being very near depopulated, some inquiry might possibly be made into the merits of the Asiatic plunderers by those who were excluded from any share in the golden fleece, he prudently remitted his fortune, and returned himself to England, after twenty-six years residence in India, with precisely the same principles, and the same disposition, (though in far different circumstances,) in which he had left it.

With

With a constitution debilitated by the heat of the climate he had so long lived in, as well as the excesses in which he had indulged his favourite vices, he was still cursed with the inclinations to evil. Vanity and folly marked his steps; nor could his hollow eyes and grey hairs, which spoke a language all but himself believed, leave a doubt that his days of intrigue were passed and gone.—But who will speak the language of truth to a man who knows not the end of his riches?—Pitiable Gorget!—There were yet those that told him he was irresistible; and, still more pitiable, he believed them!—No public place but his haggard countenance was exhibited in! No beauty passed without throwing him into affected transports! and he ever provoked the risible faculties, by discovering, in some fond folly of vanity or other, he persuaded himself he was making conquests, where, in fact, he was an antidote.

I will not leave this portrait, without informing my reader, the unhappy Mrs. Summers was released from all her cares in the
hour

hour of child-birth, leaving her infant-son in the hands of strangers, who, ignorant of the real name or connections, after some little time carried him to the officers of the parish, where he was brought up, and, at the usual time, bound apprentice to a working mechanic.

CHAPTER XII.

The Visit.

WHEN Colonel Gorget arrived in England, he was entirely without any of those troublesome ties of blood which look with expectation on Asiatic accumulations ; but there were claims his pride would not suffer him to pass over, because the memory of old times would be revived by others in proportion to his own forgetfulness ; this he was too cunning not to know, and he had, with secret exultation, anticipated the manner in which he proposed returning Mr. Melmoth's favours, whose frequent refusals to answer his extravagant demands he determined to punish by his own ostentatious generosity ; but, long before he could return to England, Mr. Melmoth had been called to receive the reward of his benevolent:

sent actions from the Being who delights in charity.

His children, however, were living, and the colonel condescended to assure them of his friendship and protection, of which he sent them earnest in very valuable presents, the produce of the land of plunder; but he was in no hurry to proceed any farther in the debt of gratitude, and secretly cursed the obligation he was under of receiving and answering their letters, which, as they abounded in professions of esteem and friendship, called for a return of the same nature.

But though, Colonel Gorget was not troubled with family claims, he soon had acquaintances enough ready to court his notice, to flatter his pride, and to make their advantage of his vast riches. To the discredit of our nobility, there were some among those whom profligacy and imprudence had reduced to the mean task of preying on the follies of their inferiors. Colonel Gorget retained his lip-deep charity, but his purse, which opened voluntarily

rily to the claims of indigent quality, as voluntarily closed against the pleas of calamity. It was fortunate for him he was a sober man, and he was too wary to play: to those two circumstances it was that he owed the retaining his dear-bought wealth, since it would very well afford the draughts frequently made on it by way of loan to his friends; and, while he continued that convenient mode, he had the honour of having my lord this, and the earl of that, stop at his door, of being received at their houses, and admitted into the parties of their female connections.

He purchased a magnificent house, which was adorned with all the trappings of the East, and finished quite in the nabob style; and Bath being recommended as salutary to the disorders he had contracted in India, another was bought there, which outdid any thing in that elegant seat of dissipation. His carriages were superb, his servants numerous, his liveries gaudy, and there wanted but one thing to complete his suite. A man of fashion was nothing without a mistress;

tress; the poor colonel wanted only passions to be as great a libertine as the greatest, but his delight was to observe the appearance of both. Two of his noble friends recommended each a prodigious fine creature; the colonel, to displease neither, took both, one to do the honours of his town residence, the other to figure at his Bath villa.

The ladies were both fine women, and quite the fashion; they were distractedly fond of the dear man, whose money they condescended to spend, and the only motive they had to accept his establishment was the passion they felt for him; they had, indeed, qualities not very common to those who love. No jealousy interrupted the tranquility of his moments, they were in perfect unity with each other; perhaps the colonel's ill health, which, as he affirmed, prevented his indulging himself in the rapture of their embraces, might make them easy with respect to his personal favours, and, as to his pecuniary ones, he was magnificent to each.

The

The truth was, he thought his reputation, as a man of gallantry, could not be supported unless a little libertinism were added to it, and, in that case, two mistresses were indispensable appendages to his establishment; but, as to inclination for either of the fair ladies so honoured, he had none. Sated with the full enjoyment of all that money could purchase, it required uncommon attractions to call forth the latent, and almost extinguished, sparks of desire in his constitution; yet, though no longer interested in its effects, he could not help making flaming love to every woman he was in company with. When no better offered, Abigails sufficed, and then a trifling present terminated the amour. He had established both his houses; gave entertainments, shewed his affluence, and exhibited his riches. He had been the subject of newspapers and private conversation; he had purchased a borough, and bought off his petitioning opponent; he had taken his seat in the senate, and made a speech there, which called forth the civility and attention of
of

of the minister ; when, the house breaking up, and the town beginning to be deserted by his noble friends, the visit he had promised the Melmoths recurred to his memory.

He had flattered these people they should be heirs to his immense fortune ; they were, therefore, continually urging him to honour them with his presence, and, as he could not well be off, though he heartily wished them in the Black-sea, (a favourite expression with him,) he resolved on taking a round to visit them, and those people who yet lived, and were his friends in the subscription-affair, to scatter some loose cash among them, and drop their acquaintance.

He took Bath in his way, where, having enjoyed the society (which he secretly hated) of his divine sultana for some little time, and found benefit from bathing, he set out for Mr. Melmoth's, as chief of that family, having apprized them of his intention in the middle of June.

The house, the lady, her children, and family, were all set out to the best advan-

rage, out of respect to a visitor from whom their expectations were so great. Their expressions of joy at the honour he did them were sincere, and their desire to render his visit agreeable could only be equalled by the professions of regard, friendship, and affection, of their guest, who praised their fare, approved their situation, and appeared, as was his custom, in raptures with the lady.

After dinner, Mrs. Barlow, Eliza Melmoth, Anna, the youngest child, and her maid, made their appearance with the desert.

It is, perhaps, difficult to conceive any thing more bloomingly attractive than our heroine at this period: she was just turned of fourteen, tall of her age, elegantly formed; her face, besides being regularly beautiful, had in it a peculiar sweetness and animation that were sure to strike the eye, and in hearts, where any of the graces that adorned her's existed, to leave a prejudice in her favour: she had not yet resigned her white frock; and her hair, which grew in
the

the most luxuriant profusion, hung down in natural ringlets to her waist.

To eyes accustomed to behold faces where beauty had no trace, or where the put-on could hardly be distinguished from the charms of nature, no wonder this fine young girl appeared divine. He had been tired out with the attacks of those beauties, whose undaunted eyes and blushless cheeks demanded his adoration; imagination was palled with their advances, and the heart recoiled from a captivity which had not the novelty of modest assurance to recommend it. But here his vitiated appetite, fired at the sight of beauty and innocence in the irresistible garb of modesty, to destroy that serenity of countenance, to rob those eyes of their downcast charms, to tear from her cheeks their blushing honours, in fine, to possess so beautiful, so innocent, a creature, struck him, the moment he beheld her, as the *summum* of human bliss, but, whether in a comeatable situation or not, it was impossible yet for him to determine.

Master of every disguise of the human heart, he concealed his admiration, and, under pretence of lavishing his caresses on the little Eliza, stifled emotions to which he had long been a stranger.

Mrs. Melmoth's maternal feelings were highly gratified by his conduct; she exulted in the happy presage his fondness for her daughter gave of his future generosity to her. He informed himself of the progress the child had made in her education, and inquired whether she meant to send her to school, if so, he would pay her pension. Mr. Melmoth answered that he had a general dislike to that mode of educating young ladies; that they had a very respectable person, who had done great honour to herself in the improvement of the young lady he now saw, and whose accomplishments, as well as the whole turn of her mind and behaviour, were the best evidence of the utility of the method they had adopted of bringing up their children.

Anna was now called out, her works were exhibited, her drawings admired, and
some

some trifles she had been so fortunate as to hit off in poetry, at which Mr. Melmoth was much pleased, produced. She was commanded to sing and play;—heaven and earth! were it in nature to be less than melted! Her execution was really above her years or the instructions she had received, and her voice was softness and melody itself.

The enamoured colonel was profuse in his compliments. Mrs. Melmoth, pleased at her exertions, and charmed at the pleasure expressed by her guest, was in the best spirits in the world: she repeated Anna's history with a view of entertaining him, and, perhaps, a little to impress him with an idea of her own humanity.—This was indeed speaking to his soul; he heard with a joy, (deep as was his faculty for dissimulation,) he could with difficulty conceal, the orphan state of his lovely conqueress. He retired early under pretence of fatigue, but, in reality, to ruminate on the means most likely to put him in possession of the charming Anna.

His plan was now altered; it would be impossible for him to compass his wishes in the short space he had allotted for this visit at the Lodge. He cursed Mrs. Melmoth's stupidity, nauseated her brats, and execrated a thousand times, the necessity he should be under of bearing with them: but how to ensnare his young prize was his chief care in cases where vengeance could be taken. General Summers's affair was always in his mind, it had taught him a lesson of caution he had never forgotten; but this girl was nobody, she was destitute of natural friends; no resentful father, no avenging brother, no injured husband, had he now to fear; and, as to Mr. Melmoth, did he not flatter himself, nay, had he not been flattered, with hopes of being his heir! Would he then dare to interfere, if he should discover it, after he had her in possession; and, before, he resolved to act with such reserve as to elude all fear of detection.

This point settled, he gave a loose to his sanguine hopes; he would devote himself
to

to this dear innocent; he would give up the world for her; he wished, indeed, he had not been so precipitate in the choice of his mistresses; but an annuity would satisfy them! How he should be envied! True she was young, but that was a fault every day would mend. He saw the folly of expecting happiness in a crowd; Anna should be his home: with those ideas it was impossible for him to sleep.

At breakfast next morning, his friendship for Mr. Melmoth, his regard for his lady, and his fondness for their children, had made so rapid a progress in his affections, he found it impossible to tear himself away from them so soon as he intended; instead of a couple of days he would make it a couple of weeks.

This intimation was received with pleasure, and their attention redoubled; but tiresome were the morning and tedious the dinner, since wholly concealed from his sight was all in which his eyes delighted. The afternoon returned with rapture; he again beheld his intended mistress more daz-

zlingly beautiful, more inchantingly lovely, than before. Thus passed day after day till the fortnight had elapsed; and, still growing fonder of his friends, the colonel could not leave Melmoth-Lodge; yet he had not advanced a single step in his grand design; at length he resolved to try the disposition of the governess, and seized every opportunity of praising her method with Miss Melmoth, of congratulating the parents on so great an acquisition, and paying her the highest compliments; but not a word of Anna.

CHAPTER XIII.

An old-fashioned Wedding.

WITH these resolutions the colonel at last found, from the information of his servant, that Anna was, as well as her governess, an early riser, and that one hour, before the family were assembled, was generally spent by them at the harpsichord; he took such advantage of his intelligence that, at the next lesson, they were surprised at his entrance (by *accident*) into the room they were in. A deep blush of timid modesty tinged the cheeks of our heroine, nor were those of Mrs. Barlow free from a glow;—they would have retired,—but the colonel, with all the softness and good-nature his very pliable features could assume, begged he might not be deprived of

so lovely a sight as beauty in bloom instructing beauty in the bud.

Mrs. Barlow was plain in her person, and on the wrong side of forty; from the character I have before given her the reader will do her the justice in believing the all-sufficient colonel, in his fulsome compliment, went a great way towards outwitting himself; which was certainly the case, notwithstanding it was accompanied with an elegant card-purse, containing ten guineas, put with great politeness into her hand; but, observing the surprise in her countenance indicated nothing in favour of his views, (that cold distrust, on the reverse, and the thankless civility, with which she accepted his purse, pretty plainly spoke how little it obliged her,) he added, with a graver tone of voice, “ I mean it, madam, as an acknowledgment of my gratitude for the care you take of my Eliza.”

A servant, at this moment, entered to speak to Mrs. Barlow; then, (his whole heart in his eyes,) in a low voice, he entreated Anna to favour him with one lesson; free,

free, equally from guile and suspicion, she was preparing to obey him, when Mrs. Barlow told her Mrs. Melmoth was up.—The colonel begged for five minutes ;—the obstinate governess would not grant one.—“ It “ was her custom to attend Mrs. Melmoth “ as soon as she arose.”—He was sure “ that lady would pardon Miss for not ac- “ companying her, if she mentioned it as “ his request.”—“ Sir,” returned Mrs. Barlow, with a look and voice which implied resolution on one hand and suspicion on the other, “ if you make the request to “ Mrs. Melmoth yourself, and she com- “ plies, I must acquiesce ; but, at present, “ you must excuse her.”—The whole of this lady’s conduct and behaviour convinced him he must change his attack and be more on his guard : it was plain the old lady was clearer-sighted than he wished her, and proof (which was to him a miracle) against gold : but for her the complying little angel would have staid with him ; a curse, which this thought sent from his heart before it reached his lips, was changed to a

smile, and, with a polite bow, he led Mrs. Barlow to the door, wishing her good morning.

Mrs. Barlow had seen, in the different families where she had served, a good deal of what is called life : she was marked very much with the small-pox, which cruel disorder had greatly altered a beautiful set of features, it had indeed left her nothing but her eyes and teeth, which were both very fine ; her manners were by most people thought reserved ; from those circumstances she had escaped much temptation to evil herself, but she therefore had the more leisure to look into the actions of others, and the uninteresting sameness of her own life rendered the vicissitudes of people, with whom she was connected, the more observable.

The colonel's character was no less an object of alarm than the charms of her pupil, whom she loved with an affection truly maternal ; she had perceived the corrected transports, the eager looks, the niggard approbation, of the former, and trembled for
the

the fate of the latter, over whom she so strictly watched, and whose steps she so closely followed, that another fortnight passed without forwarding the colonel's honourable scheme; he found he was suspected, and fervently did he wish he had this Argus for one hour in the hallowed land of indulgence, or that he could venture at the same means of quieting her, which, in India, would have excited no inquiry. But the law (rude, inconvenient, English law,) was the dread and hatred of his soul; his patience was nearly exhausted, when an event happened which gave new life to his wishes;—this was the marriage of Mrs. Barlow, who had been addressed, when in her nineteenth year she waited on a lady at Oxford, by a Welsh parson. Her lover's passion had not only survived the loss of her beauty, but had been cherished with unremitting constancy twenty-three years, waiting with hope and patience till it was in her power to save, and his to obtain, something like a decent subsistence.

Mr.

Mr. Mansel, with this view, had served several Welsh curacies, with his eye on a living Sir William Edwin (a baronet, who, on particular occasions, did him the honour of calling him cousin) promised him. The moment the incumbent died he posted to London, where his patron then was, to remind him of his promise; Sir William was as good as his word; and the happy parson having obtained the living, he took Somersetshire in his way down, in order to carry his long-affianced and beloved bride home with him.

Mrs. Melmoth heard, with a visible concern, the necessity she was under of parting with so valuable a woman; Mr. Melmoth protested her fellow was not to be procured at any rate; but their good friend, the colonel, found, in some degree, means to reconcile the lady to that event, by observing she might be a decent kind of woman enough, he believed she was a little precise or so, but that did not signify, she might be a very proper body to superintend the bringing up of Anna Dalton, but really

Mrs.

Mrs. Melmoth must excuse him if he made distinctions. Eliza Melmoth, if she behaved well, would move in a higher sphere of life; he, for his part, who (again they must forgive him) was used to the conversation and company of the first people, knew there were many things which a young woman of fashion ought to learn; these that woman was totally ignorant of, French in particular. Did ever any body hear of an English governess being engaged where a French one could be procured!

Here was a speech directly to the heart of the fond mother; joy and happiness were in the sound; Eliza Melmoth would be heiress to Colonel Gorget, and a match for a duke. From that moment all the useful part of the child's education was laid aside: the idea of riches she was to inherit swallowed up her mother's reluctance at parting with the amiable, the sensible, the modest, Mrs. Barlow; it riveted her confidence in the colonel; and inquiries were directly set on foot for a French governess.

Mrs.

Mrs. Barlow having, therefore, now a handsome opportunity of accepting the offer of Mr. Mansel, and complying with his ardent request of going with him to Wales, as her services could not only be dispensed with, but were in fact no longer wanted, a day was fixed for their marriage at the parish-church, when Mr. Melmoth was so good as to stand father to the bride, and gave an elegant dinner on the occasion. In the mean time all her leisure was spent in repeating the instructions her heart dictated to Anna, whose parting with her governess was the first real trouble she had yet known; she loved, and was beloved by, Mrs. Barlow with the affection most likely to stand the test of time or any change of circumstance, as it was founded on the mutual approbation and esteem of each other's principles: the maternal love and tenderness, which had accompanied all the valuable lessons of the worthy governess, were repaid by the lovely pupil with the most dutiful and affectionate regard; no task was difficult, or entered on with reluctance, convinced,

convinced, as she was, that her own good was the ultimate object in view.

Since the increase in the family of her benefactors, Mrs. Barlow, foreseeing the sun of Anna's favour was setting, had been long fortifying her mind against possible, if not probable, events; she had been arming her with patience, and conjuring her to persevere in innocence and integrity now that she was on the eve of leaving her, and leaving her too in a situation, which, though it appeared dangerous to her, she was not justified in mentioning, since her own surmises were her only authority; she might be wrong;—she might injure the colonel:—but her love for Anna rendered her anxious: it was not, indeed, till the instant of separation she knew how necessary to her happiness this dear girl was; gladly would she have taken her wholly from Mrs. Melmoth; but the bare mention of such a thing she knew would be taken ill, and she had too high a sense of gratitude to offer an affront where she acknowledged herself much obliged: nothing was therefore in her power but

but to enforce by admonitions (where tears were blended with instructions) those lessons of virtue and propriety which had been the subject of their eight years studies: she begged that their correspondence might be regular and unreserved; and told her, with an earnestness in which truth and love were equally visible, she would always find a home with her, and obliged her to promise, if any unforeseen event should occasion her, either from necessity or choice, to quit the Lodge, she would, instead of returning to the Daltons, come by way of Bristol to her, as that gentleman's family was large, and she would be there receiving obligations, when, in favouring Mr. Mansel and herself with her company, she would, by adding so considerable to their happiness, confer it on them. The poor weeping Anna felt as if she was going to be annihilated; she promised to observe, with the most sacred regard, the minutest thing her dear friend enjoined her, and to treasure in her memory the invaluable instructions she had received from her.

Their

Their parting was accompanied with floods of tears, and their affectionate adieus infected the whole house. With her eyes did Anna follow the chaise ;and when it was no longer in sight, she fell senseless into the arms of one of the maids, who, with all the servants, had followed to the gate, with their good wishes and prayers, a woman, whose inoffensive temper had, for the long time she lived at the Lodge, preserved her from enemies, while the justice, candour and humanity, of her disposition had made her many friends.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Contrast.

MR^S. Melmoth's inquiries after a French governess, on which occasion she had written to London, were answered in two days, before the departure of Mrs. Barlow, by the application of a person who was accidentally within twelve miles of the Lodge.

A lady of high rank and quality was on a visit at a quondam friend's in Somersetshire: she was there attended with a French gentlewoman, who had been long enough about her ladyship's person to be in possession of some few anecdotes, (perfectly innocent no doubt,) which gave her, as she presumed, a title to a greater degree of familiarity than sat quite easy on her lady, who, however, did not find it convenient

to

to reprehend or discharge her, but wanted not inclination to do both. It is probable mademoiselle, as she was called, (who was not deficient in the species of low cunning, some people choose to dignify with the name of wit,) might perceive that she was more feared than valued, and therefore took this opportunity of providing for herself in a country gentleman's family, or, that she might fear, her lady, who was above setting any great value on character, would grow weary of the trammels her insolence now made her wear.

Whatever were her motives, she instantly applied for a recommendation from Lady Waldron to Mrs. Melmoth, assigning ill-health as her only reason for her wish to part with so good and so amiable a lady. London air nor London hours agreed with her; the country she hoped would be of service to her; but, wherever she was, it was impossible for her to forego her respect and veneration for her dear lady, who, on her side, declared nothing on earth should prevail on her to part with so valuable a dependent,

pendant, but her regard for her constitution, and wish to forward her interest.—Mademoiselle was therefore dispatched in Lord Bury's chariot to Melmoth-Lodge with the following card :

“ Lady Waldron's compliments wait on
“ Mrs. Melmoth, would certainly have had
“ the honour of paying her respects to her
“ at the Lodge had she not been confined
“ with a nervous head-ache.

“ Lady Waldron, hearing Mrs. M. is in
“ want of a French governess for the Miss
“ Melmoths, takes the liberty of recom-
“ mending Mademoiselle Frajan as the
“ most proper person in the world for such
“ a trust.—Lady Waldron will be answer-
“ able in every respect for her character and
“ abilities.”

Colonel Gorget and his two friends were in the saloon taking their tea when this important message arrived.

“ Heavens !” cried the colonel, “ the
“ divine Lady Waldron in the neighbour-
“ hood and I not at her feet !—A few
“ years back she would have been highly
“ piqued

“ piqued at such neglect ; upon my soul I
“ was fond of that woman ;—but let us
“ see her card ;—ha ! the same pretty pen-
“ woman ! and her style too——”

“ Is, no doubt, very good,” interrupted
Mr. Melmoth, “ but, upon my word, my
“ dear,” (turning to Mrs. Melmoth,) “ I
“ cannot think Lady Waldron’s recom-
“ mendation an eligible one for the sort of
“ person you want.”

Mr. Melmoth, you astonish me,” an-
swered the colonel in warmth, “ are you
“ really so ignorant of what is due to peo-
“ ple of distinction, as to doubt (notwith-
“ standing the little gallantries of her la-
“ dyship’s life) any person would, or, in-
“ deed, could, object to her recommen-
“ dation !—Mrs. Melmoth, see the lady
“ by all means !”

Mr. Melmoth would have offered a ne-
gative, but his circumstances were so in-
volved, and his expectations so great from
his generous friend, that, contrary to his own
judgment, (which at all times was good,)
he remained a silent, unapproving, specta-
tor,

tor, while mademoiselle was admitted, examined, hired, and returned with the following card:

“ Colonel Gorget’s very best compliments to Lady Waldron, begs leave to return a thousand thanks for the honour her ladyship conferred on his friend, Mrs. Melmoth, who is happy to have any person under her roof that has attended on the charming Lady Waldron.

“ The colonel will have the honour of paying his devoirs to Lady W. and Lord Bury as soon as convenient to them.”

It will, I presume, be asked why Mrs. Melmoth herself did not answer Lady Waldron’s card—I have told my readers that Colonel Gorget was, according to his own account, acquainted with the first men, as well as the finest women, in the kingdom; but I did not pledge myself for the veracity of that assertion. The truth is, excepting those hungry and profligate peers who condescended to borrow his money, which, I before

Before observed, he would freely lend to a peer, and the family to whose father he owed all his good fortune, he was as little known as respected; and, as to Lady Waldron, he had really never seen her but in public: nevertheless quality acquaintance was his greatest ambition, and, not being troubled with the modest diffidence that keeps merit at a distance, or, when it is suffered to approach, prevents the display of its claims to patronage, he seized, with undaunted assurance, on this occasion to introduce himself; he did not, however, take the sense of his friends on the contents of the card to the lady; he felt the superiority of Mr. Melmoth's judgment and understanding too forcibly to suffer him to inspect it into so flimsy an artifice. As to matter of custom and politeness, were they not poor, and was not he rich? and were they not in too much distress to risk offending a man in whose power it was to be their friend? Certainly Mr. Melmoth felt himself hurt; and it was not till he had heard a great deal more, from his wife, of bearing, and

VOL. I. G forbearing,

forbearing, he could quite resume his good humour; but that was a mere bagatelle.

The next day brought the French governess;—the apartments were now to undergo an entire alteration;—the little library, where all the ideas of Anna were formed, was no more;—mademoiselle must have a room to herself.—At this our heroine did not repine as she then slept with Eliza; but soon had she sufficient reason to regret her lost friend, her respected companion. Every successive hour in her time had its employments or amusements that contributed either to health or improvement; the hours, appropriated to useful or ornamental needle-work, were now loitered away from trifle to trifle, or actually sunk in direct idleness; and those most delightfully filled by reading some of the best English authors, in which happy periods they were frequently honoured with the company of Mr. Melmoth, who had the goodness to guide her judgment and direct her taste, now lost in an illiterate commencement of
the

the French language, which Anna could not comprehend, nor would attend to. In fine, she despised the instructress, and could not profit by her lessons. Ignorant, haughty, and ill-bred; commanding, with an air of insolent pride, those, who not being used to such manners, scorned to obey; mademoiselle began her career at Melmoth-Lodge with the dislike of all its natural inhabitants; the colonel, indeed, was charmed with her; as to the children, it was enough to say "mademoiselle was coming" to frighten them into any thing.

This respectable person, for whose character a lady of fashion was answerable, was in her thirtieth year; had been handsome; was dirty in her person; immoral in her discourse; ignorant of the refinements of her own language, and too volatile to learn with propriety that of the country she found it convenient to reside in; her speech was a mixed jargon of broken English and vulgar French; she wore a vast deal of rouge, took snuff, loved intrigue, and hated work. Such was the person engaged to supply the

place of Mrs. Barlow, at Melmoth-Lodge,
under the auspices of Colonel Gorget.

CHAPTER XV.

Family Anecdotes.

THE gallant colonel was now in his element ; he was waiting a mandate from Lady Waldron ; he was ogling and sighing at the Frenchwoman, and he felt his desires increase every moment for the innocent victim he had marked for his own.

He had proposed two days stay at the Lodge ; as many months were now elapsed, and he spoke not of departing.

Mrs,

Mrs. Ashby and Mrs. Mandeville, two sisters of Mr. Melmoth, were in impatient expectation of the time he would confer the same honour on them; and, anxiously jealous of a partiality so marked, more than half-repented giving up Mrs. Melmoth's acquaintance, as they had, by that means, shut themselves out of the way of paying their court for the loaves and fishes.

They were continually sending him invitations, tiresome enough, as he could not prevail on himself to leave the Lodge till he had visited Lady Waldron, made a conquest of mademoiselle, and secured Anna; but, it at last struck him, that, the distance being so small, he might occasionally visit those ladies without remitting his attention to either of the points he wished to keep in view; indeed, he now recollected it as an odd circumstance, which had before escaped his observation, that neither of Mr. Melmoth's sisters had been to pay their personal respects to him there; this was a matter as unintelligible to his hosts as himself; the family-connexion had been declined, on the

part of those ladies, with little ceremony and less good nature; and, whenever they met by accident, it was with such stiff contempt on one side, and careless indifference on the other, that an *éclaircissement* was the last thing likely to take place.

Mr. Melmoth, in justice to himself and family, could not help relating, with some acrimony, the unprovoked caprice of his relations, on being questioned on that head by his friend.

The colonel expressed both grief and surprise to hear that his charming, his amiable, friend, Mrs. Melmoth, had been so impolitely used.

He supposed, her husband's having so nobly preferred happiness to riches, in his choice of her, to be the cause of her being treated with such disrespect.

The lady blushed at this compliment, which rather mortified than flattered her; but answered coolly, if that were the case, she presumed the dislike of Mr. Melmoth's relations would have been shewn at the time of their marriage; on the contrary,
the

they had lived with great harmony four years.

Well, it was astonishing! the colonel could not account for it; but, however, he would take a ride to Mrs. Ashby's; he would know the cause; and did assure them, if the sisters did not well acquit themselves, or make proper advances towards a re-union in the family, they should be equal strangers to his friendship and favour.

Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth could have dispensed with this interference; they felt no regret at being deprived of the society of relations, between whom and themselves there existed neither affection nor esteem; but the apparent candour and good nature of the motive called for thanks and acknowledgments; yet, though they did not refuse, neither did they court, the good offices of their officious friend on an occasion about which they were perfectly indifferent.

However, the following morning Colonel Gorget's servant was sent with the joy-

ful news, that his master would condescend to dine with Mrs. Ashby next day, and requested Mrs. Mandeville would be of the party.

The ladies were in raptures at the sight of their dear and honoured friend; they had been broken-hearted at his being so near such a length of time without allowing them to pay their duty; and Caroline Ashby was not a little mortified that her young cousins had so much better fortune than herself, in the opportunity, his residence at the Lodge gave them, of attracting the honour of his notice.

The colonel, on his part, was all affection and politeness; he had suffered very much in depriving himself so long of the happiness he now enjoyed; he was charmed with the ladies, and delighted with Miss Caroline; and, notwithstanding what I have said of the duplicity of his character, he was, in his professions of friendship and regard, quite as sincere as the ladies to whom he addressed them were in theirs.

After

After dinner Miss Ashby was called to her instrument.—She was a tall coarse girl of sixteen, who was so partially approved by the mother, and whose every action so charmed, that, when once the delightful theme of her perfections was started, it engrossed her whole attention.

“ Come, Caroline, let the colonel hear
“ my favourite song.

“ Play your new lesson.

“ Now, my dear, the rondeau.”

With a conceited air, and unblushing countenance, Caroline obeyed.—Destitute of taste, ear, voice, or judgment, and free from the constraint of timid modesty, the young lady entertained their guest: no room indeed was left for his requests; the fond ill-judging mother still continuing her plaudits, and still calling forth the fancied attractions of her darling daughter, not knowing that, instead of gratifying, she was disgusting, the person it was so much her wish to please.

The contrast, between the manners, as well as person, of the prosperous Caroline

Ashby and the poor orphaned Anna; was indeed too striking not to redouble the value of the one, in his estimation, as he felt tired and disgusted with the other.

It was in vain he sought an opportunity of entering on the subject of the coolness that subsisted in the family; Miss Ashby had still some charming thing to amuse him with, till, after shifting his seat several times, and betraying every token of restlessness, he was obliged to break in, on what he vowed was the harmony of the spheres, to beg an hour's serious conversation; but Miss was still desired to keep her seat, as Mrs. Ashby was sure Colonel Gorget would wish to hear another song before he left them.

He then, with great apparent concern, inquired the reason so manifest a disunion prevailed in so respectable a family.

A general simper overspread the countenance of the ladies.

They shewed a reluctance to enter on the subject, which he was clever enough to perceive

ceive was affected, and that with expectations of being more closely urged.

After many evasions, and pretended backwardness to say any thing that could lessen their friend's good opinion of any part of the family, Mrs. Ashby took upon her to be spokeswoman.

She appealed to himself, whether, in the first instance, it must not be a great mortification to them to see their only brother, a young man, in possession of such a noble estate, and the last male of their family, free from incumbrances of any kind, throw himself away on a woman of neither birth nor fortune, the daughter of people of doubtful character, as she supposed he knew.

The colonel bowed his assent.

“ However, when the thing was past recall, we thought it best to be on decent terms with them; but when, in the face of the whole country, she shamelessly brought her natural daughter here, dressing and educating her in a far superior style to what our children were dressed

“ and educated in, squandering our dear father’s fortune on her illegitimate offspring,—it was too much; the honour of our family was concerned, as well as our own private feelings, in avoiding all intercourse with them.”

“ What is this you say, Madam?” answered the colonel in the utmost astonishment; “ Let me understand you,—her natural daughter!”

“ Yes,” returned Mrs. Ashby, “ that Anna, that pet, is her own child; she was brought from London by an old servant of my father’s, who received her from the people that nursed her, and they told Dame Plunket, Mrs. Melmoth had at last prevailed on her husband to take the brat. All the old servants (some of them born in the house) were discharged for presuming to deliver their thoughts on so scandalous an affair. It is now no secret; every body in this country knows it, nor can she be ignorant that her infamy is discovered; but
“ it

“ it is no wonder she wishes to conceal
“ it from you, sir.”

This was news indeed to Colonel Gorget; not that he believed a syllable of the affair as represented by Mrs. Ashby. Mrs. Melmoth, at his first coming to the Lodge, related in such an ingenuous, artless, manner, her accidentally meeting with the orphan she protected, together with the name and place of abode of the person from whom she took her, whose sacred function was, as well as Mr. Melmoth's authority, a confirmation that placed beyond a possibility of doubt the truth of the story; besides Mr. Melmoth, although, as Dame Plunket said, a mere sap in worldly wisdom, had too much honour as well as understanding to support his wife in such an atrocious imposition; it was so easy to trace it to conviction if false, and no less to confirm it if true, that he hesitated not to decide, in his own mind, on the innocence of Mrs. Melmoth. He had, indeed, so thorough a knowledge of the world, and what it would do to carry a point, that he

he made no doubt but this was a calumny, originating at first in the spirit of curiosity, and confirmed by that of ill-nature; but the matter now was, what use could be made of this piece of intelligence,—could it not be tortured so as to turn to the advancement of his grand design?—Mrs. Melmoth's favour was of consequence to him just now; should he, therefore, make a merit with her of vindicating her injured fame, and clearing her character from the unjust aspersions it had sustained? or would it not be better to reserve this act of justice for some future occasion?

Could he not by and by tell it in a manner that should both alarm and distress her? and was it not probable, in that case, he might seize some favourable moment to induce her to discard the innocent cause of her disquiet?

At all events he could at any time disclose it as an act of kindness, or, if more convenient, as cause of quarrel, and an excuse to break off the connection when it
was

was no longer necessary to be so partial to her, or so dotingly fond of her children.

At present, then, he resolved to sail with the stream.

After some moments profound silence, during which he turned in his mind the preceding arguments, attentively watched by the ladies, he raised his eyes to heaven, and, deeply sighing, cast them down again instantaneously without articulating a syllable.

Another pause raised the expectation of the company; and so prepared were they to coincide with the wisdom of his opinion, that had he, as they pre-supposed he would have done, stood forth the champion of Mrs. Melmoth's honour, rather than risque a difference in opinion with him, they would have given up the matter, notwithstanding their rooted prejudices, and their warm regard to the credit and honour of their family.

But such condescensions were not likely to be demanded. The colonel solemnly addressed them:—

“ Let

“ Let us,” said he, “ my ever dear friends, where justice will permit it, leave room for candour : let us believe you may be misinformed.”

Encouraged beyond their hopes,—No ; they assured him that was impossible ; they were but too certain.

“ Well, then,” continued the mild benevolent man, “ let us not know it ; or, if we must know it, let us (hoping the poor woman may have seen her error, and in compassion to the children she has by your brother) give the world an example of charity and forgiveness in our conduct.”

If the reader has been used to converse with Colonel Gorgets, (and he will find many of them on the theatre of the great world,) he will know that there are two ways of enforcing an argument ; and that the same words, literally repeated, may serve for either.

Thus, to be looked upon as the peacemaker of the family, and to be esteemed the friend of Mrs. Melmoth, were what
the

the colonel chose to express in his words ; but the manner of his uttering them made it pretty plain neither was in his meaning.

With the present inhabitants of the Lodge he was perfectly free from all apprehensions of a discovery of the latent cause of his remaining there. Mrs. Melmoth was a good-natured, open-hearted, thoughtless, woman, whose bosom harboured no suspicion of any kind ; all she had in view was paying court to the nabob for the sake of her children.

The squire was, every moment he could steal off to his study, up to the ears in heroic poems, and, when present, more than half in the third heavens ; as for the French governess, she was almost a match for the colonel himself. Elated with his amorous advances, she had, in her own ideas, laid a regular plan of defence and capitulation, and already rolled her vis-a-vis down St. James's Street, not giving way to Lady Waldron herself.

Anna,

Anna, the treasure for whom all his plans were laid, innocent and careless, thoughtless and unsuspecting, was now wholly employed in finishing a muff for Mrs. Melmoth, romping with the children, or playing on the harpsichord, and placed her supreme delight in receiving a summons from Mr. Melmoth to his library, or writing to Mrs. Mansel, which she never failed doing, or omitted informing her of every occurrence that happened; to this easy unsuspecting circle it was not the interest of Colonel Gorget to make any addition.

Mrs. Ashby, a widow and a coquet; Mrs. Mandeville, a starched prude, and Caroline Ashby, a pert, forward, inquisitive, miss, were not at all people he chose to give an opportunity of observing on his actions.

It was therefore, at present, not convenient to him to bring about a reconciliation in the family, though he thought proper to preserve the appearance of endeavouring to effect it.

When

When he parted with the ladies, at Ashby-Grove, he told them it was with infinite regret; and, though he could not but wish to meet them at the Lodge, yet he must own it was a delicate point, on which he could not determine, as it appeared, in the light the affair now stood, equally commendable whether they continued their reserve in respect to their family, or whether they dropped it in regard to their brother; but he would give them his farther sentiments when he had the honour of waiting on Mrs. Mandeville, which should be in the ensuing week.

At his return to the Lodge, Colonel Gorget lamented the implacable temper of the ladies he had been with, made comparisons, in an indirect manner, between the gentle and sweet temper of his amiable friend, and that of the violence and self-sufficiency of those he had visited; and, in consequence of his unfavourable observations on those ladies, he would no more think of dividing his time, but, while he
staid

staid in that part of the country, make his home at the Lodge.

I need not say Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth were very happy at this preference in the colonel, or that they expressed themselves not more honoured than obliged, because, though their circumstances were so much deranged, it was the folly of the age, not the vices of it, which had found place in their dispositions : they really felt his partiality as the highest obligation, and acknowledged it with as much gratitude.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Rapture.

COLONEL GORGET, now perfectly at ease in his outworks, seriously began his attacks on our young heroine. It was, I have informed my reader, Mrs. Barlow's custom, from the time the music-master was discharged, to keep Anna to a regular practice of lessons one hour every morning. The interruption, which alarmed the governess, induced her to change the place of practice; and, from the time the colonel intruded on them, they had made use of an old organ in an octagon temple, where formerly little concerts had been held. Anna, in obedience to Mrs. Mansel's injunctions, as well as to gratify her own taste for music, continued her morning visits to the temple: of this circumstance an old valet, who, being

being as artful as his master, was the only servant who could stay any time in his service, informed the colonel; and he, the very first day after this intimation, under pretence of strolling round the gardens, surprised her in the middle of a lesson, which so entirely engrossed her attention, that he had sufficient leisure to examine and admire the various charms of a young creature, who was the emblem of youth, innocence, and beauty: but his emotions did not suffer him to enjoy long in silence so exquisite a feast. At first the surprise both alarmed and confused her; but he, throwing all the softness and polite respect into his manner he so well knew how to make sit easy on his features, begged a thousand pardons for the intrusion, and, with great earnestness, intreated he might not interrupt her; said he would instantly leave the place, if she required it, but should be for ever obliged by one song.

This request, in her idea, amounted to a command; she knew how exceedingly Mrs. Melmoth was interested in pleasing
this

this gentleman, and, unapprehensive of danger as unconscious of guilt, with no other embarrassment than at first proceeded from her natural diffidence, she sang and played.

The morning was one of the hottest in August; not a breath of air interrupted the melody of her voice, and the accompaniments were echoed from an adjacent grove. She astonished and charmed the enraptured colonel in her warblings of "Fair Aurora," from Artaxerxes; another and another song was asked, and granted; when, suddenly recollecting her dear companion in this morning amusement, she made a quick transition from Sestini's lively "*Non dubita*" to Linley's beautiful elegy of "I sing of the days that are gone."

He could hold no longer, no longer restrain the transports of a passion he secretly vowed no power should prevent him from gratifying.—Catching her in his arms, he swore she was more than mortal!—she was divine!—and, ravishing, from her hitherto-unpolluted lips, kisses, not less disgusting
from

from his figure than frightful from his vehemence, for a moment deprived her of all power of resistance; soon, however, (thoroughly terrified at his indecent violence,) her screams rent the grove; but, lost now to every idea except that of gratifying his hideous passion, he recollected not how far he was removed from that country where rape and murders are tolerated acts! deaf to her cries, unmoved by her youth and terror, he was proceeding to outrage, when the sudden appearance of mademoiselle took from him all active powers.

The trembling Anna escaped out of the temple, and, with inconceivable agility, ran into the nursery, where she fainted away.

The interview between Colonel Gorget and Frajan requires an abler pen than mine to do it justice; that lady was awakened much earlier than common by her own agreeable ideas. The gallant colonel had taken an opportunity of attributing to her charms his stay at the Lodge; the passion he felt for her he vowed would consume him;

him; life was no life, it was a lingering living death, without the adorable Frajan. He added as many more brilliant things as could be crammed into a two-minutes stop, *en passant*, as he crossed the hall; and, so delighted was she with his homage to charms, which, to say the truth, were pretty well worn, that it was late before her delightful reveries gave way to repose, and early when they resumed their empire cover her imagination, to indulge in her fond presage of future happiness.

She strolled into the garden, and was, at the instant of her turning towards the temple, deliberating with herself whether she might not, by affecting reserve draw the old fool into marriage; many a one had been so caught by those who could not boast half her attractions: indeed, one recollection, a trifling objection occurred, namely, her being married already; but that was of small import, Monsieur Frajan was a gentleman who had the honour of belonging to the *Grand Monarque's* guards; he was too polite to be hard of access, and

too poor to be troublesome; he had the misfortune of not being able to support Madame Frajan in a style equal to her elevated notions; and he had the happiness of being too great a philosopher to let that disturb his repose: but then, supposing that matter adjusted, she should be obliged always to live with the ugly wretch; now, as a mistress, she was entitled to separate purse, separate pleasures; and, as to interest, it is seldom, indeed, in that situation they are united. These considerations being all reduced to facts, what must her consternation be at seeing the man who was dying for her, whom she set down as her fixed slave, on the point of committing violence on a beautiful inmate in the same house, a mere chit, a girl she held in contempt!—Rage tied her tongue as confusion did his.

But rage in the Frenchwoman, though strengthened by so severe a disappointment, had not power to repress the happy turn of her nation; her risible faculties were irresistibly and involuntarily excited by the object before her.

The

The colonel's figure was truly comic ;— imagine you see a little mean-looking person, his eyes not yet recovered from their vicious stare, endeavouring to blink away the shame of detection ; his fine laced ruffles hanging in tatters over his wrists ; and the contrast between the powder and his olive complexion, rendered still more striking, by its being brushed off his head on different parts of his very yellow face ; that head, on which time had made woful depredations, it being very near bald ; his friseur had, with great art and care, scraped up a few bristles of venerable hue to dress in the front of his wig, which was made so exactly to fit, that it was not, till she saw it on the floor, mademoiselle could believe he carried so unfashionable a thing about him ; his locks, totally deranged, hung about his ample forehead ; and, his *tout-ensemble* being too much for French gravity, she exclaimed, “ Ah, *mon Dieu !* “ what, with that figure, would you have “ done with the child ? ” and, bursting into a fit of laughter, picked up his wig, and

begged to have the honour of re-adjusting his head.

The colonel's enraged looks presently reminded mademoiselle of the lapse she had made: it was, she now recollected, her part to be dying with grief at the discovery;—but another discovery had likewise been made; her exclamation, the loud laugh, the contemptuous shrug, spoke a language the colonel, with all his vanity, could not help understanding; it told him the conquest he had meditated was as little likely to injure her peace as his own; she was, therefore, as to her own person or sentiments, not an object in the least interesting to him, but those involuntary marks of contempt for his person would certainly have operated to her immediate disadvantage, had he not been restrained, with a presence of mind that never so entirely forsook him as in the present instance, by a recollection how much it was in her power to serve or injure him in his grand design, now inflamed beyond his power of subduing.

Bitterly

Bitterly did he curse the precipitate folly that would, doubtlessly, alarm the girl, and render the assistance of this auxiliary of importance: his intention was to have treated Anna with a delicate indulgence, to court her respect, to insinuate himself into her confidence, to excite her gratitude; but by no means to alarm the trembling virtue he knew was implanted in her mind.

The sad gradation, from uncontaminated purity to audacious vice, was a lesson he had taught many an innocent heart: well was the subtle veteran in iniquity acquainted with each winding maze, each artful clue, to attain that horrid end; and deep were his regrets that he had suffered passion to counteract his usual precaution.

The girl might now be telling Mrs. Melmoth all that had happened; she might, at this moment, by her artless eloquence, be exciting the resentment of Mr. Melmoth for the insult offered his friendship and hospitality; or, in case that gentleman might not choose to break with so valuable a friend,

he might send her away ; she might escape ; he might see her no more ! That idea was not to be borne ! no time must be lost. To take the enemy he detested to his bosom, while it would answer any purpose of his own, was what he had practised his whole life ; but it was not often he had been so situated with a female, on whom he endeavoured to make an impression, who, after giving every token of a growing attachment, had, in one unguarded moment, convinced him he was her scorn. Hard as it was to forgive Frajón's *mon Dieu !* it was here absolutely necessary at least to counterfeit forgiveness.

Coming, therefore, directly to the point, he seized the hand of the governess, which action she mistaking for an overture towards making an amorous peace, withdrew with the prettiest assumed, soft, melancholy, air imaginable ; but, from the languishing downcast, her bold eyes were turned into a stare of wonder at the manner of his addressing her.

No

No vows, no tender protestations, no deprecation of her anger, or promises of future fidelity; but a sacrifice more acceptable, and as well understood,—a heavy purse found its way into her unreluctant hand.—What other arguments (if any were necessary) Colonel Gorget made use of, to appease the resentment of Frajan, I know not; certain it is they parted very good friends.

The situation in which I left my heroine, spread an alarm among the female servants; Mrs. Melmoth was acquainted with her indisposition; and very anxious, on her recovery, to know what could have occasioned such a violent agitation of spirits.

Anna's innate delicacy, the modesty of her nature, and the innocence of her heart, tied her tongue; the recollection of the colonel's insults filled her with confusion; she was ashamed to repeat, even to Mrs. Melmoth, what she had been exposed to, and afraid to say from whom: a flood of tears was the only answer she could make; and her benefactress, finding her anxiety increase

by talking, with the kindest expressions of affection, left her, and descended to the breakfast-room.

The colonel entered while Mrs. Melmoth was relating to her husband Anna's sudden illness: how he felt is one thing; what he said, and how he looked, another: with well affected pity in his countenance he eagerly listened to her whether any part of the temple-scene had transpired; and, finding, to his great joy, it had not, was then at liberty to be as sorry for the poor girl as he thought convenient.

Anna gladly made her illness an excuse for not going into the dining-parlour with the children; it was, indeed, more than an excuse, as she was, still very much indisposed; but, though she did not make Mrs. Melmoth the confidante of her ill treatment, she was less reserved with Mrs. Mansel, to whom she wrote an account of the whole affair, beseeching her advice how to conduct herself with regard to her benefactress, as she could not summon courage to tell her of the abandoned conduct of a man who
was

was so highly respected in the family : she was not quite at ease with herself at the first concealment she had ever made from that lady.

Curiosity had once tempted Frajan, in breach of all the laws of politeness, to open a letter from Mrs. Mansel to our heroine, who, being taught wisdom by experience, guarded against the like inconvenience, by requesting Mrs. Mansel to direct her answer, under cover, to Jenny Stedman, the nursery-maid.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Fracas.

ANNA kept as much as was in her power to the nursery, and the governess appeared equally desirous with herself to avoid a *tête-à-tête*; nor did she once name the colonel, or drop a single hint of the temple-scene.

Some few days after, when our heroine had recovered her spirits, she repeated, as in the fulness of her heart she often did, how happily her time passed with dear Mrs. Mansel: Frajan, who heartily despised the poor creature, as she called the late governess, took occasion to throw out some very sarcastic and contemptuous reflections on her management of the young ladies.

Anna answered warmly, and perhaps pertly, that the Miss Melmoths would have
cause

cause to regret the change as long as they lived ; for that, during the eight years Mrs. Mansel resided at the Lodge, she was, in person and mind, one invariable example of the lessons she taught. This speech (with, I am afraid, rather a marked emphasis in some particular parts of her eulogium) provoked mademoiselle, who, as I have informed my reader, being married, shall be no longer dignified with that title.—Madame Frajan then retorted as spitefully as with the aid of malice and ill-will she could ; and, as it was a cause for which our heroine would have died, she was not spared in her turn ; and the governess, being very little more indebted to patience than to prudence, was so enraged, that Anna was obliged to her heels, which preserved her from the fury of the irritated Frajan.—Disappointed in her attempts to overtake her, she flew to Mrs. Melmoth ; complained loudly of Anna's insolence ; said she had hitherto had the honour of serving ladies of the first distinction, who, thank heaven, had never taken the liberties with her An-

na had done ; she would not on any terms put up with it ; and she must beg Mrs. Melmoth would discharge one of them.

The lady found herself much embarrassed by this requisition of the governess, delivered in a style she by no means approved ; she loved her pet ; this was the first complaint that had been made of her, and she doubted much of the insolence imputed to a child who was remarkable for her easy temper.

Dismissing the complainant, therefore, for the present, Anna was ordered to attend Mrs. Melmoth. She was extremely surprised, when, instead of the mild gentle girl, who had never offended a single creature that she knew of, she beheld an absolute little virago, sobbing with passion and glowing with anger, her face and neck in a flame.

Her benefactress began by severely reprehending her for being insolent to Fräjan ; but this agitated her so much the more as to render her, from passion and tears, unintelligible,

intelligible, so that she was dismissed in great anger.

Cut to the soul at having, for the first time, offended Mrs. Melmoth, Anna sent in an hour after, and begged repeatedly to be admitted, but she had too seriously offended to be indulged.

Mr. Melmoth, unfortunately for Anna, was gone to the county-assize, which generally kept him three days from the Lodge, and the colonel, having at last received the welcome mandate from Lord Bury, was at his house.

Lady Waldron found herself so well entertained in the society of this amiable personage, she prevailed on him to sit down to picquet with her after dinner, when she contrived to ease him of a hundred pieces; which, notwithstanding it infringed on one of his established rules, he paid with great politeness and good humour; though I cannot but own, some trifling manœuvres in the lady's play might have discomposed any other set of features but those of the colonel; yet he had dined with Lord Bury
and

and Lady Waldron, and it was not in nature to be out of temper in such company, and the lady had promised to preside at a *fête* he intended to give on his return to London:—these were circumstances so highly acceptable to his wishes, it could not but have a very happy effect on his spirits, which was still visible when he attended Mrs. Melmoth to breakfast next morning. He heard from his fair hostess, in her open communicative way, the fracas between Anna and Frajan, and, at the same instant, her surprise and displeasure at the passion, or stubborn spirit, she did not know which to call it, of her *protégée*.

Mrs. Melmoth was artless and undesigning in her own nature, and so pliantly disposed toward the colonel, that all he said bore the semblance of wisdom and justice. Mr. Melmoth enforced respect by the honour and probity of his disposition. Madam Frajan was ready for any scheme of iniquity. Now was the propitious moment, now the time, if ever, for the colonel

nel to secure to himself the possession of the charming object of all his wishes.

He smiled.

It was not a smile of approbation.

It was not a smile of pleasure.

Neither could it be said to be a smile of contempt.

But the colonel could smile, and turn, and smile again.

He had the art of making his features speak what, with great honour, his tongue might deny.

The smile called up the colour of Mrs. Melmoth into her cheeks.

It said ;

“ What, madam, is it only now you are acquainted with this girl’s ill disposition?” It said more than that ; it called for an apology from Mrs. Melmoth for what her heart had always told her was the most meritorious act of her life, and obliged her to plead the destitute situation of Anna, as well as her having been at that time childless, as an excuse for what had been her boast.

A second smile deprived her of the power of advancing another syllable in vindication of her own charity.

An obstinate silence on the part of her guest, till the breakfast-things were removed, threw her into an agitation she could not account for; but the good colonel was at no such loss; he knew its source as well as the means of improving it to his advantage.

A turn or two across the room, in deep contemplation, heightened the solemnity of his visage and address; when he, looking full at her, demanded, on her sacred honour, how long she had known this girl?

Though astonished both at the question and the manner of its being put, it was not possible she could deviate from the account he had already heard, as that account was strictly true.

Her answer threw him into another fit of silence, and then, without farther ceremony, he acquainted her with the reasons assigned by the ladies of the family for not
visiting

visiting her; adding, that it was a fact implicitly believed all over the country, that Anna was her own natural daughter; that the girl was so insufferably haughty and overbearing, it confirmed the general report; and it was on that principle, and the fear of giving her offence, that she was the last who was informed of what the whole country rang of.

Every attempt of mine to describe the surprise and distress of Mrs. Melmoth, at this mortifying stroke, would be totally inadequate to her feelings; I will therefore beg my readers to make the case their own. It was with great pain that she supported herself till her maid brought salts and water: her laces were cut; and a friendly shower of tears a little relieving her, the first use she made of the returning power of speech was to direct Mr. Melmoth to be immediately sent for.

This was not what our man of gallantry wanted. He ever declined altercations with men, particularly those of understanding; he therefore took the liberty of privately

vately countermanding Mrs. Melmoth's orders, and begged she would retire and compose herself, and when she was recovered, he would request to be admitted to her apartment.

The moment the illness of her benefactress reached the ears of Anna, she ran to her in agony, and continued about her, regardless of the presence of Colonel Gorget, whom, in her concern for her friend, she entirely overlooked. She followed Mrs. Melmoth to her chamber, and lamented so tenderly and so respectfully any thing should ail her, that she could not find in her heart to retain any displeasure against the poor girl, notwithstanding such a provoking interpretation of her motives for her partiality as that she was just informed of.

The lively and grateful sensations of our heroine were not unnoticed by the colonel, who, dreading the influence of sensibility over the mind of Mrs. Melmoth, did not choose to trust them long together; but, as soon as any kind of regard to decency would permit

permit him, sent his request to be admitted; the lady then, kissing Anna, bade her retire, and the colonel entered.

He began in very moving terms to inveigh against the ill-nature and scandal of the world;—that part of it, which could wrest so laudable an act into so infamous a meaning, deserved annihilation.

The injured lady said she would not insult his judgment so much as to enter into a vindication of her innocence; she was sure it would appear with such unquestionable proofs as would cover her calumniators with shame.

He suffered her to proceed in a mixture of grief and passion till tears again relieved her full heart; then, opening what he had farther to say with the most flaming professions of friendship and regard, vowing he had not himself a doubt but she was as innocent as he knew her to be amiable, begged to observe to her, scandal was much easier raised than refuted; it was likewise much easier refuted than silenced; while, therefore, the girl continued under her protection,

tection, what had been believed would be remembered.

“ And what, sir,” said Mrs. Melmoth, eagerly interrupting him, “ must become of the poor thing ?”

“ What, madam,” answered he gravely, “ will become of her if you still keep her ?” “ you know best ; but I advise you to consider whether your circumstances are such as will provide for a girl you have so improperly educated ; or, if they are, could you knowingly fix such an indelible stain on your husband’s family as suffering a weak attachment to influence you to persevere in confirming the shameful reports already circulated ?—Come, come, Mrs. Melmoth, you must forgive me if, for the sake of your children, your own sake, and that of the respectable family (I speak not in contempt of your own) into which you are married, I urge you to the only act which can clear your character in the opinion of the world ; for my own part, I frankly confess I look on myself, though not of their blood, as
“ allied

“allied to the honour of the Melmoths.—
“You must positively part with this
“girl.”

“Ah!” said Mrs. Melmoth, weeping,
“she is the best creature in the world.
“What will become of her poor, poor,
“girl! my heart bleeds for her.”—“Oh,
“she would do very well. The parson,
“from whom she was taken, would pro-
“vide more properly for her, by getting
“her a service, than she could by keeping
“her in a character it was very unlikely she
“would ever be able to support.”

In short, partly by hints that he should be eternally disobliged by her not adopting his opinion, and partly by his absolute assurance, on his honour, that the girl was wholly unworthy the kindness shewn her, of which her treatment of the amiable Frajan, a person who certainly had been very much esteemed by people of the first distinction, was one of the many instances he knew, but did not choose to repeat; he at length prevailed on the gentlest of female hearts to be guilty of an act of deliberate

berate cruelty, by discarding, without any real provocation, from her favour and protection, an innocent, unoffending, young creature, she had adopted as her own child, without first informing herself whether any other person would receive her.

Eager to carry his deep-laid plan into execution through all delay or opposition, “*A propos, madam,*” said he, “the London stage passes to-morrow morning;—oblige me by exerting your resolution:—accept this sacrifice to your humanity,” presenting a bank-note of twenty pounds;—“see her no more as you value your own peace or my friendship. And here,” continued the generous creature, “I believe I have not yet paid my entrance into the good graces of my Elizabeth; do me the honour of presenting her with what this will purchase in my name,” putting into Mrs. Melmoth’s hand another note of one hundred pounds.

Gratitude, prudence, and that all-subduing argument, self-interest, were too powerful to be resisted;—it overcame all farther

ther scruples:—Frajan was summoned,—
She was directed to send Anna away by the
London stage; and, in fine, the *pet* was
discarded, the *orphan* no longer protected!

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Rencontre.

WITH what a light heart and glad-
dened countenance did Frajan fly to exe-
cute her commission. “It cannot be!”
said the petrified Anna; “it is not in the
“ nature of my dear benefactress to be so
“ cruel. What! turn me out of her
“ house, without suffering the poor girl she
“ has so often and often pressed to her
“ heart, to kiss her dear hand, to pray for
“ and to bless her for her goodness! You
“ are surely diverting yourself, madam, by
“ sporting with my misfortunes.” The
unfeeling

unfeeling governess assured her over and over of the truth of her message. She advised her as a friend to make the best of the matter, pack up her trash, and, since go she must, set off with a grace, that the servants might not make their observations.

“ Ah !” answered Anna, “ how much
“ at ease must that mind be, which, in such
“ a moment, could be biassed by such trivial
“ ideas ! Alas ! I think not of any
“ thing but never seeing my dear Mrs.
“ Melmoth more,—of being for ever separated
“ from my sweet Eliza,—of no
“ more being permitted to hear from dear
“ Mr. Melmoth the instructions of wisdom,
“ or to thank him for those he has already
“ taught me. Do, dear mademoiselle,
“ beg for me ! Alas ! I have long expected
“ to go,—but not in so very sudden,
“ nor in so disgraceful, a manner.”

“ Not I,” answered the Frenchwoman :
“ I assure you. You think to whine Mrs.
“ Melmoth out of her resolution ; but the
“ colonel will take care of that.”

“ It

It is then to his endeavours and yours," returned Anna, with spirit, "I owe the loss of my benefactress's favour; I will not, therefore, trouble you with any message to her; but as to your associate, you may tell him, it is poor spite in such an old man, to persecute a young girl whose offences towards him are her strongest claim to the favour of heaven. God reward you both. I have no selfish regrets at leaving this place; none but what arise from my grateful love to its owners.—Dear spot," continued she, looking mournfully round her, "once the hallowed retreat of peace, content, and unanimity, the bright dwelling of virtue, the seat of wisdom! but now"—(darting a look of contempt into the guilty soul of Frajan) "you, madam, and Colonel Gorget are here;—why need I describe the hateful reverse?"

It is not to be supposed Frajan, whose least virtue was patience, bore this keen reproach without retorting, which she did with all the spite and abuse in her power;

and that, it must be confessed, is saying a great deal.

Anna, full of her own concerns, heeded her not. She set about packing up her trash, as Frajan had not improperly called her wearing apparel: for she had grown so very fast, and money was so scarce an article at the Lodge, that she had, for the last three or four years, been altering and cutting up one old thing to piece out another, without having the deficiency supplied by any thing new; so that, though she was blessed with a person and manner that stamped the gentlewoman on her appearance let her dress be what it would, her cloaths were but a sorry recommendation to respect, and, bad as they were, less useful than valuable; such as she had, however, she put up in a small trunk of Mrs. Mansel's, and a smaller bundle, and then, once more, made an effort to see Mrs. Melmoth, by prevailing on the footman to deliver an humble, but ardent, request to be indulged with one moment's audience after tea; but the colonel, who stirred not from the lady's side the whole day, frustrated

ted

ted her wishes by setting his negative on the message as soon as delivered.

She was likewise forbid seeing the children. Mademoiselle would not suffer them to be disturbed with her deceitful whimpering.

This, though meant as an act of cruelty and mortification, was, in its effect, the kindest thing that could have happened; for Anna so doted on Eliza, the parting with her would have half broken her heart, without answering any purpose but rendering her unfit for her long journey.

Such a sudden turn could not but surprise the servants; but, as every creature in the house (those only most concerned excepted) had heard, and, indeed, generally believed, the report so long circulated respecting the consanguinity of Anna to Mrs. Melmoth, so when, by the colonel's command, the old valet communicated to them the injury that had been done their mistress, and assigned that as a reason for the discarding our heroine, in order to clear the lady's character, which had been falsely as-

perfed, it became a matter of courfe. They, however, were all filled with pity and regret at parting with her; every fervant in the houfe followed her with cordial wifhes for her health and profperity. Jenny, the nurfery-maid, who had been her's when fhe firft came to the Lodge, wept over her, and promifed faithfully to fend Mrs. Manfel's letter the instant it arrived. No choice was left her, otherwife her inclinations would have led her, as fhe promifed, to Wales; but Mrs. Melmoth's commands were, that fhe fhould go to London; and, as fhe had never yet difobeyed any order of that lady, fhe did not choofe to do it now.

At four o'clock in the morning the ftage ftopped, by order, at the Lodge.

Mrs. Melmoth, not then under the constraint impofed by her artful gueft, got out of bed to take, in a peep through the curtain, a parting view of her pet; fhe faw her flow, reluctant, fteps followed by all the maids and fome of the men, wiping the faft-falling tears from her face, which,

on

On her reaching the stage, was turned full to her apartment, and then to the nursery; and, after a minute's pause, in silent grief, with an act at once graceful and affecting, she extended her open hand to each, first consecrating it with a kiss, then, making an easy courtesy in return to the benedictions of the servants, with a bursting heart she ascended into the vehicle.

Mrs. Melmoth's emotions were so strong at the last sight of a child she had brought up, and her affection, renewing, filled her with such regret at her departure, that she rang for her maid, in her first agitation, to have Anna detained. Kitty, who, with her fellow-servants, was at the gate, not directly hearing the bell, the stage was far out of sight before she attended her mistress, whom she found in a fit of hysterics, which rendered her unable to breakfast below.

Nor was she the only person whose rest was disturbed by a desire to see the last of our heroine.

Madame Frajan was too full of joy at this event not to delight her eyes with so

acceptable a sight : but she had another reason,—she had thought proper to convert the twenty-pound note, given her for Anna, into ten guineas, which she thought quite enough for such a brat, prudently sinking the remainder into her own purse, as she must certainly be a better judge how to use that sum than such an ignorant thing as Anna ; but, however she might reconcile the discretion of the act to her own mind, she was not quite so easy in her apprehensions of detection ; nor could she securely enjoy the success of her fraud till our heroine was out of sight when she returned to her repose, and slept, according to custom, till ten o'clock.

Colonel Gorget too—but let me not make a mistake ! his rest was not broken by his curiosity, for he actually was too much overjoyed to take any : he told, in wakeful anxiety, the tedious hours as they passed, till the welcome one arrived, which, by removing Anna from Melmoth-Lodge, carried her nearer the habitation he was so kind as to design for her ; not without emotion,

motion, though of a different nature, did he watch every graceful attitude of his unconscious charmer; his heart throbbed with ungoverned extacy; and, when the coach drove off, he pronounced himself the happiest of men.

The tears, which plentifully flowed from the eyes of our young traveller, at first hindered her observing her companions. They consisted of an aged farmer-looking man, a pretty young woman, his daughter, with whom he was returning from a visit they had been making to some near relations, who lived thirty miles beyond Melmoth-Lodge, to Epsom, where they resided, and the identical Dame Plunket; the latter was grown a few years older it is true; she was a good deal fatter; and somewhat richer than when last she travelled in company with our heroine; but her malignant, busy, censorious, disposition still remained; and as her ill-will to 'Squire Melmoth's family was now encouraged by their being reduced in their fortune, they were hardly out of sight of the house when she began to o-

pen with such coarse and illiberal abuse of them, and such unintelligible, though disgusting, inferences, on so fine a lady's being returned to her original poverty, which, according to her account, was bad indeed, that Anna heard her with astonishment, not at first knowing it was to her she was speaking.

When, however, she did understand the vulgar jargon was addressed to herself, and called to mind the woman whose disagreeable behaviour had made a lasting impression on her memory, it had a very different effect from what the notable dame expected; for, instead of mortifying, as she kindly intended, it exhilarated her spirits; her pride (of which she had no inconsiderable share) was hurt, and, being roused by insults she could not have provoked, no longer suffered the despondency of her countenance to encourage the attacks of her ill-conditioned fellow-traveller.

The uncommon beauty of her person, with the sweetness of her manners, prejudiced the old man and his daughter very much in her favour, which she improved by
all

all the little attentions in her power, while she treated the malicious shopkeeper with every mark of indifference and contempt.

Enraged at such airs, Mrs. Plunket sneeringly congratulated her on Mrs. Melmoth's acquisition of a friend who durst tell her her own. Every body, she said, knew Colonel Gorget's visit to Ashby-Grove would rout her out of the Lodge, and fit it should! Miss Caroline Ashby was a gentlewoman, and it was very hard she should give up to the Lord knows whom!—Oh! if the old 'squire could but look down and see the doings, which were carrying on at Melmoth-Lodge, he would not rest in his grave! Poor dear creature, he little thought his estate would be spent to support madams and bastards!

All that Anna could make out of this fine harangue was, that Colonel Gorget was her enemy, and that Mrs. Plunket was a friend to no one but herself; but, as she most heartily hated the former, and found herself much inclined to despise the latter, it gave her little concern.

They arrived, without any accident, at the second night's stage; when, to her great mortification, she understood she was the next day to lose her friendly companions, and be left wholly to the society of Mrs. Plunket; her insuperable dislike to that notable dame rendered her extremely uneasy; the young woman observed it, and good-naturedly pressed her to alight at Kew-bridge with them where their one-horse chaise would meet them to cross the country, and thence to Epsom, whence carriages went every day to town.

Anna endeavoured, in vain, to reason herself out of her prejudices; the more she thought of it, the more she felt her heart sicken at the idea of proceeding on her journey to London with the disagreeable shopkeeper, and, at length recollecting Mr. Dalton was not apprized of her coming, accepted the offer made her by the good country-folks. A man was procured to carry her luggage, and she accompanied her honest companions over Kew-bridge, and got to Epsom to dinner.

The

The farmer was a widower in good circumstances; his daughter managed his house; they were industrious inoffensive people; easy as to situation, and mild in their tempers; they grew more pleased with their guest the longer they knew her, and were importunate in their intreaties, as she informed them her friends were unacquainted with her journey, to stay with them a few days before she proceeded to London.

The open-hearted friendship and guileless sincerity of these honest people were too consonant with her own disposition not to be very pleasing to her. She accepted their invitation, and wrote to Mr. Dalton to inform him of her leaving the Lodge, and where she now was, but referred him to their meeting, which would be in a few days, for particulars.

This was one of those incidents in human life on which often secretly depends the good or evil of our days. It was to our heroine a particular intervention of that providence which, we hope and believe,

makes innocence its care; an intervention that could be neither foreseen nor pre-concerted, and which preserved her honour, if not her life.

Perhaps the reader may suspect that something more than the honour of the Melmoth's family was Colonel Gorget's inducement so strenuously to urge the removal of Anna, and may suppose he might promise himself some advantages from the distress Mrs. Melmoth's desertion would expose her to;—he did more; he took measures which he flattered himself would put it in his power to make good that loss by being her protector himself. Of one thing he was certain; no character of his, no reputation or honour he possessed, could suffer by that or any other step. He had written some days back to prepare one of those horrid wretches, who make a traffic of female honour, to entrap and guard the unsuspecting girl when she should arrive in London; and, the instant he could be sure of her positive dismissal from the Lodge, he sent off his trusty servant express, with orders

orders for his agent to wait the arrival of the stage, in a hackney-coach, before it reached Hyde-park Corner; she was then to say, Mr. Dalton not being at home, and Mrs. Dalton indisposed, she was come from them, in consequence of a letter received from Mrs. Melmoth, to conduct her to her friends.

This scheme would certainly have taken effect, as Anna was not only a stranger to the world, but to all kinds of fraud and double-dealing, had it not been for the accident before related.

When the stage-coach passed, it was accordingly stopped, and Anna enquired for; happily Mrs. Plunket was too much enraged at the insolence of the faucy beggar to answer any interrogatories; she knew nothing of or about her, and, in a huff drawing up the blind, refused to say another word, leaving the enquirer to learn of the coachman what he knew, which was little enough; all he could say was, that he set three passengers down at Brentford, but who or what they were he could not tell,

as

as he had driven the coach but from the last change of horses before they left him.

The valet being within call, although he kept out of sight, was now consulted : he was sure no person whatever set off with Anna from Melmoth-Lodge ; he saw her go himself, but, as he well knew his master's heart was set on the accomplishment of his design, they agreed to go on to Brentford, examining, without success, every carriage that passed. As they could gain no kind of information, the woman returned to town, and Walters went on with his ill news to his master, who was waiting in anxious expectation to learn the success of his scheme.

CHAPTER XIX.

A Curtain-Lecture.

WHEN Anna left Melmoth-Lodge, Colonel Gorget, joyless and insipid as now appeared every thing there, affected to be in the best humour and highest spirits in the world. Mrs. Melmoth's were as proportionably low. Indisposed, and dissatisfied with herself, it required all his efforts to keep her up: he was attentive to every look and word; nothing could exceed the warmth of the friendship and esteem he professed for her; he romped with Eliza, and her infant sister came in for a share of his caresses; to divert the too intense reflections of Mrs. Melmoth was no less his study than his interest.

He could form no excuse for leaving the Lodge just now; he did not, indeed, choose
to

to stir till the longed-for news came from his agent in town; but he took occasion to alter his mind from a circumstance he did not foresee.

When Mr. Melmoth returned from his little journey, he was most graciously received by his good friend the colonel; and this particular civility was the more agreeable to him at that time, as he met a person at the assize, who, having a large mortgage on his estate, had dropped some ugly hints about foreclosure, which much mortified and hurt him; and he just resolved to open his mind to his zealous friend, not doubting but he would rejoice in an opportunity to give him proofs of that good-will he so liberally professed by advancing the money and taking the mortgage into his own hands.

The fond father called for his children the instant of his arrival; and, pulling out of his pocket a beautiful drawing, said, Mrs. Lasmayor, a lady who lived at the county town, begged Anna would copy it for her.

“ Alas ! ”

“Alas!” answered Mrs. Melmoth, bursting into tears, “she is not here,—she is gone,—I have sent her away!”

Mr. Melmoth, in the utmost astonishment, demanded her meaning. Colonel Gorget, then (for the lady was unable) related the whole affair; but Mr. Melmoth’s generous heart, so far from according with the colonel’s opinion, recoiled from the prejudices he saw that good man wished to inspire; he reproached his wife severely, both for her want of feeling and judgment, in parting with the lovely orphan they had so long patronised, and brought up with such care, who so amply repaid them by her amiable disposition and fine qualities. The story, repeated so pompously by Colonel Gorget, had long reached him; he was told of it within a few months of its invention; but, too generous to avenge the cause of the guilty on the innocent, he took every other possible method to convince those, whose good opinion he valued, of its falsehood and absurdity; but it had never struck him, as it had done his *worthy* friend, that discarding

discarding the unoffending orphan could operate as a justification of his wife's character. Perfectly satisfied with it himself, he chose not to disturb her peace by troubling her with the surmises of others; and, as to the quarrel with the French governess, he avowed the most contemptible opinion of that lady, her abilities, and principles: in short, Mrs. Melmoth had never seen her husband so much hurt or displeased with her before; she pleaded the colonel's advice and assistance in parting with Anna, and he, consequently, attempted to convince them both that he acted on principle; but those arguments, which the lady had found unanswerable, appeared equally fallacious and ridiculous to her husband; he swore never to forgive the inhumanity of the act, and keenly upbraided his guest for urging Mrs. Melmoth to a step that would, in the judgment of every humane being, be a reproach to her as long as she lived.

This was a kind of freedom Colonel Gorget could by no means relish; but, as he knew how to turn every thing to his advantage,

advantage, he immediately recollected that a breach with Mr. Melmoth at this particular period was the most convenient thing that could happen; he vindicated his conduct with a mixture of acrimony and haughtiness he was well aware would exasperate instead of appeasing: his wish was now to make matters worse;—his plan succeeded,—Mr. Melmoth, in the involuntary resentment of his generous heart, and in his compassionate feelings for the poor orphan, forgot his mortgage, his poverty, and his hopes; he had even the imprudence to revert to some circumstances in the life of the great man, which, as he chose to consign them to oblivion himself, he could never forgive Mr. Melmoth for remembering.—His horses were directly ordered; and, though it was past ten o'clock, he set off, after profusely paying the servants for the trouble he had given their master, to Mrs. Ashby's leaving his hosts, for the first time in their lives, angry and dissatisfied with each other.

The

The morning, with his wife's tears and remonstrances, brought cooler thoughts to Mr. Melmoth; for, though he still continued his partial regrets for the fate of Anna, he began to be sensible of his impolitic conduct towards a man who had it so amply in his power, and, he had every reason to conclude, in his inclination, to serve him. Mrs. Melmoth, on her part, lamented, with some little asperity, the fracas that had at once deprived them of the advantages and hopes her sanguine ideas had brought to a certainty, and could not help inveighing bitterly against that warmth in her husband, excited by the interest of a person who was nothing to him, to the prejudice and, perhaps, ruin of his own children. He felt the sad conclusion of her argument, though he was self-acquitted as to that part of his conduct which had brought on him the displeasure of the colonel; nevertheless, in compliance with the request of his wife, he rode over to Mrs. Ashby's to make what submissions his circumstances, not his judgment, dictated.

But

But his wish to conciliate matters was entirely frustrated; the Machiavel he followed was congratulating himself on his escape from the Lodge. He was but too happy at being furnished, by the simple honesty of Mr. Melmoth, with an excuse that would justify him for breaking with people, who, building their airy castles on so slight a fabric as his promises, might have been so impertinent as to charge him with ingratitude, as well as injustice, when they found how wide apart promise and performance were, with so great a man.

He refused even to see his late-esteemed friend; and Mrs. Ashby, now justified in her spleen, and gratified in her malice towards her sister-in-law, failed not to pay her own court at the expence of her relations; scandal took the hint; Mrs. Melmoth had lost Colonel Gorger's favour owing to keeping her bastard at the lodge; the mortgagee pressed for his money; creditors grew clamorous; the now-distressed Mr. Melmoth, urged by necessity, wrote
repeatedly

repeatedly to the callous colonel, and at last his letters were returned unopened.

It will not be wondered that, in so unpleasant a situation, all thoughts of Anna were sunk in their own difficulties ; there remained for poor Mr. Melmoth but one alternative, either to give up his all, or leave the kingdom, which he and his family very precipitately did, first discharging, with every mark of contempt and disgust, the French governess.

While these matters were transacting at the Lodge, Colonel Gorget was impatiently waiting the return of his servant : but the disappointment of his hopes, and the pangs it gave him, began the punishment due to his hypocrisy at the instant he promised himself the full enjoyment of his wish ; he had been so very careful to attend to the least *minutiæ*, and made so sure of succeeding in his plan, that he could scarcely credit his servant's protestations of the zeal and fidelity with which both himself and associate had executed their commission.

After a thousand questions, and as many curses, he pretended urgent business ; took

a very tender leave of Mrs. Ashby and Miss Caroline, for whom he vowed eternal friendship, and set out for London, stopping at every inn, where the stage called, to trace the lost object of his desires. He found Walter's report confirmed at Brentford, where he lost her himself; but, not content thus to give up happiness just as he flattered himself it would be within his grasp, he first set a watch about Dalton's house, from which finding no Anna was there, he went personally to make enquiries; and, relying on the truth of Mrs. Melmoth's account of the manner in which Dalton had first met her, he introduced himself by pretending some knowledge of her parentage.—Nothing prospered with the poor colonel that tended to the destruction of our heroine; the method he fixed on to gain intelligence was precisely the one least calculated to answer the purpose.

Mr. Dalton dreaded no event in the world so much as a discovery of Anna's family, since that must consequently lead to a settlement; he was every day more averse to making.

making. He was much mortified by the receipt of Anna's letter from Epsom, as he had hoped all trouble and expence, on her account, were ended; but that mortification was transient, as it was succeeded by enquiries he believed came from a relation, who would have more easily traced her to the Lodge than he could do, either to where she now was, or where he might with great ease remove her. He, therefore, absolutely and resolutely denied knowing any thing of or about such a person; assuming such an air of truth, that the colonel began to doubt his own judgment, and to conclude the girl was actually, as was reported, the daughter of Mrs. Melmoth; which, after continuing, for some time, his watch in vain in Dalton's neighbourhood, he at last believed, and that she had been conveyed, by order of her mother, out of the road of inquiry.

CHAPTER XX.

Another Journey.

AT this time two of Dalton's children lay ill in the small pox, an accident particularly favourable to his views of concealing our heroine, as they knew not whether she had had that distemper.

When her letter (in which she told him of the necessity she was under again to trouble him for an asylum, till some mode could be fixed on to enable her to support herself) came to him, and that followed by inquiries after her that filled him with dismay, he wrote directly to inform her of the situation of his family, desiring her to remain where she was for some little time; generously adding to make sure of her not coming to town that he would

pay for her board, and promising to fee her very soon.

Three days after came to his house, inclosed by the faithful Jenny, Mrs. Manfel's answer to Anna's letter.

Guilty minds are soon alarmed; every thing that concerned his charge, was at this period particularly interesting to Dalton; he was at no time restrained by a sense of honour; and now curiosity had self-preservation to aid it—the seals were cautiously broken—and the contents filled him with such joy, that having as cautiously re-sealed the packet, he went to Epsom for the purpose of delivering it.

His surprise was inexpressible, at being there shewn into a neat country parlour, where a tall, elegant young creature, whose looks and manners still more than her beauty commanded respect, soon recollected him, and threw herself at his feet, with the most lively expressions of gratitude and affection—He felt an involuntary kind of awe, accompanied with a pang something resembling conscience,
which

which choaked his utterance though I will not venture to say it was that irresistible monitor; because, if it were from that time to the period in which I now write, I do not believe it had disturbed him with a second visit: however, he soon got the better of it, be it what it would, and congratulated Anna on her improvements, at the same time observing, how very lucky it was she had been prevented going to London, as her beauty might have been spoiled by the small pox.

“ I am shoure,” said the good old farmer “ that would be a sad pity; God “ bless her, I would keep her for ever “ first.” As Dalton found, to his great satisfaction, the honest farmer would take no money for the time Anna had been there, he very earnestly offered it; but the honest creatures meant the friendship they expressed, and so far from accepting his money, begged Anna would remain with them till all danger was over; but the letter Mr. Dalton brought with him, put every other

idea out of her head; she was on the wing to obey its contents, which was as follows:

“ MY DEAREST CHILD,

“ Your last letter fills me with such apprehensions for your safety, that I shall not rest till you are with me.

“ I advise you, my dear Anna, to make Mrs. Melmoth the confidant of the wicked Colonel's conduct; she may, perhaps, have her reasons to avoid a breach with him, but I am sure her regard to virtue and delicacy, as well as her undoubted affection for you, will induce her to grant the request I make her this post of suffering you to pay me a visit: but my Anna, this is on a supposition, no other insult may have rendered it expedient for you to leave the Lodge, or that by the contrivance of so bad a man and woman, which I expect, you may be sent from thence—if either of those should be the case, God, I trust, will preserve you, and enable you to
come

come to me in safety; my sweet child, how dearly have I missed you, and with what pleasure have I begun to decorate an apartment that shall be your own.

“ Mr. Mansel, the tenderest of husbands, and most worthy of men, bought a Piano Forte yesterday at Caermarthen for you; it has a good tone, and in repair; though the lady who had it was so long in ill health before she died, it has not lately been used: the woodbines and jessamines in front of your little room rather darken it, as the casements in this country are small, but they shall be taught to grow in forms most pleasing to the child of my heart.

“ How often have you contributed to my happiness! come to me, my own Anna; it is only your society that is wanting to complete the felicity of your affectionate,

And truly

Maternal friend,

MARIA MANSEL.”

“ LLANDORE.”

Subjoined to the foregoing.

“ MY DEAR MISS,

“ You must forgive my joining Mrs. Mansel, in requesting you will oblige us with your company, as soon as can be made agreeable to yourself; the Brecknock stage sets out from Lad Lane twice a week, from whence I will fetch you—pray apprise me of the time.

I am,

With great regard,

Your humble servant,

DAVID MANSEL.”

Mr. Dalton made a merit of consenting to the thing of all others most agreeable to himself.

He promised to enquire out the stage, and examine the books, and when any female passengers were going, to let her know.

The honest farmer insisted on her stay with him till the day of her departure for
Wales,

Wales, as she could not be received at her friend's without danger to herself.

Mr. Dalton inquired into the state of her finances, and was rejoiced to hear they stood in no need of his assistance.

The manner in which she had been dismissed from the Lodge, very slightly claimed his attention; so his end was answered, it would have been new, indeed, for him to concern himself about the means—he returned to town full of encomiums on his ward, but resolved to loose no time in getting rid of her, which he had an immediate opportunity of doing.

A clergyman's widow, who received the annual bounty, was come from Wales to London, to get the apprentice fee for her daughter, who she bound to a mantua-maker, and happened to hit on a woman, who in consideration of Dalton's religious principles, and professed poverty, and being one of his hearers, very kindly accepted from him five pounds, being exactly one quarter of the sum he received from the fund of the clergy, as an

apprentice fee of his daughter.—Mrs. Bowen, a widow, and mother of a large family, had not worldly wisdom enough to make so good a bargain; she paid the whole sum, got her pension, and was returning home, very thankful for the benefits she had received, when Dalton was on the look out for a proper opportunity of conveying Anna to her friends.

Mrs. Bowen, though in the next parish to Llandore, lived five miles from Mr. Mansel's, but she engaged nevertheless to deliver her to Mrs. Mansel.

The stage left town the second day after Dalton had been at Epsom, and Anna received the joyful summons, on the morning of that pleasing one on which she was required to be in town.

The old farmer and his daughter would accompany her in his one-horse chaise; and Mrs. Dalton, whose curiosity was greatly raised by her husband's description of Anna, with her own, and Mrs. Bowen's daughter, met them at the inn, where they supped, and spent the evening together

gether in the greatest harmony, as the farmer insisted on bearing all the expence.

Mrs. Dalton parted with our heroine with many kind expressions, and invited her return when weary of Wales.—Our travellers reached the place of their destination without any one incident worth relating.

Mrs. Bowen found her son waiting for her with a single horse, and borrowing a pillion at the inn, mounted Anna behind him—As this was the first time she had ever been on horseback, her fears obliged her to go a very slow pace; so that although they left Brecknock, and had but ten Welch miles, which is not above eighteen English, to go, it appeared the longest journey she had ever taken; and the craggy narrow roads, sometimes ascending nearly perpendicular, at others frightening her with their sudden declivity, and the almost barren mountains, which bore no traits of inhabitants, except the numerous flocks of sheep, con-

tributed not a little to the tediousness of the journey; more especially as her conductor understood not her language— It was eleven o'clock, and the darkness of the night, which was likewise wet, had for the last two or three hours taken from her the power of distinguishing objects, when to her inexpressible joy, they reached Llandore.

CHAPTER XXI.

A worthy Parson and a Welch Village.

MR. Mansel's family were retired to rest; he was in his study himself, it being Saturday night; and his wife, used to later hours than was known in that peaceful part of the globe, where all had been silent above an hour, was undressing in her own apartment, when a loud holla at the door, where no thundering rap was ever heard, alarmed her; she opened her unbarred window and asked who called; but to describe the joyful extacies the good woman felt on hearing a well-known and beloved voice answer, "It is me, it is Anna;" is impossible; the doors flew open, the heart and arms of Mrs. Mansel expanded to receive their welcome guest; and, then, for the first time since their separation, did Anna feel quite happy; she was now, she thought, at home; the rugged paths that had led

to the blessed haven of friendship were forgotten; no place could be barren or uncultivated where philanthropy lived, and where benevolence thrived.

When Mrs. Mansel shewed her to the little apartment they had allotted her, contiguous to their own, she took possession of it with the same heart-felt ease and pleasure, as if the most indulgent mother had given it her; a sound and refreshing sleep, unalloyed by care of any kind, succeeded the fatiguing journey, from which she did not awake till noon next day.

The good woman and her son, who Mrs. Mansel obliged to stay the night, had been gone hours before Anna was sensible of the happiness that awaited her; the embrowned mountain tops, the disagreeable and almost unfrequented roads she had passed, were yet in her mind, and Mrs. Mansel's woodbines and jessamines she set down as mere figures in rhetoric. Impressed with those ideas when she advanced to her window, and feasted her eyes

eyes with a sight of the most beautiful valley nature ever formed, with not only the creepers Mrs. Mansel described, but a moss rose tree, and a myrtle actually growing into her room, she could scarce credit her senses, or believe she was not in fairy land.

The situation of the village of Llandore is beautifully picturesque and romantic; it stands in a fertile valley, through which runs the river Tawe, whose frequent, but harmless overflowings, give a richness and verdure more captivating to the eye, from the wild mountains which form, to appearance, an inaccessible chain on each side of the vale, irregularly interspersed with various old ruins, the sad memento of the faded glory and sunken dignity of the ancient inhabitants of Cambria. In the middle of a large green church-yard, stood the church, and round it, in two semicircles, on the outside of the wall, were the white-washed neat dwellings of the inhabitants, with here and there a break for a better house than common, such

such as the parsonage, the doctor's, lawyer's, exciseman's, and presbyterian parson's. The river was so divided above the village for the conveniency of working two mills at the other extremity, that a stream of clear water ran on each side at the back of the houses, and joined a mile farther; the green of their little orchards and gardens were beautifully contrasted by the snow-white appearance of the walls which surrounded them. Lime was so very cheap, and cleanliness in such high estimation at Llandore, that the meanest hut vied in hue with the best house there, which was the parsonage.

This was a comfortable dwelling, where neatness and convenience was so judiciously blended, it would be difficult, and, perhaps, impossible to alter any part of it, without injury to one or the other of them; a flower garden reached from the front almost to the vestry door; at the back of it was a hanging kitchen-garden and orchard, the trees so regularly planted, that from all the windows, the river which ran at the bottom,

bottom, and the hill on the other side, were seen to the most charming advantage. The living was worth sixty pounds a year; Mr. Mansel had a few acres of ground to his house, and he rented a few more, just enough to supply his family.

Mrs. Mansel I have already described; her husband's character may be told in a few words: he was a man of liberal education; the cheerful practiser of those divine and moral laws which he equally enforced by precept and example; he bore himself, every part of his sacred function, with the honour of his master in view; he preached a plain, sound doctrine, that all might understand, and all, if they pleased, put in practice.

In the duties of religion he knew no distinction of persons; in private life he was respectful, not servile to his superiors, but affable and mild to his inferiors; in his conversation he was at once simple, elegant and polite, though strict in his own morals, he knew how to pity frailties

ties in others; religion was in him cheerful and respectable.

He never failed solemnly to admonish his flock in cases of vicious excess; but in the innocent diversions of the country, he was one of the first; the song, the dance, or Christmas gambol, was incomplete without the good rector.

He was firmly attached to his wife, having the highest opinion both of her heart and understanding, and was always in most credit with himself, when he anticipated her sentiments; he was the Israelite in whom there was no guile; and he had this very particular happiness, he was a person of whom every body spoke well.

On the opposite side, fronting the parsonage, but nearer the summit of the mountain, at the distance of one mile, distinguished by the numerous white chimnies which appeared to rise out of the very thick grove that surrounded it, was Llandore Castle, an ancient family mansion belonging to Sir William Edwin, but now inhabited by Mr. Herbert, who having
married

married the favourite sister of that Baronet, was complimented by him with this place on account of its vicinity to some large iron works of which Mr. Herbert was, in right of his wife, a principal proprietor.

The view of this ancient building, which had been for ages dignified with the name of castle, and the grandeur as well as the beauty of the surrounding woods, reaching from the front down to the edge of the river, over which a regular row of white large stones formed a convenient causeway; and from the back up to the top of the mountain, was an enchanting addition to the pleasant prospect from the parsonage; when our heroine had time to look round her, there was an air of content and freedom in the inhabitants, a cleanliness in the look of their houses that charmed her, and the respect and veneration which the parishioners bore their rector, was extended to every part of his family. Mrs. Mansel, notwithstanding she was unacquainted with their language

language was soon endeared to them on her own account. "I am not," said she to Anna, (when, in shewing her every part of the house, they came to a little closet filled with medicines of all kinds) "ambitious of the character of a Lady Bountiful, but the poor people are here in general so ignorant, they frighten themselves at the idea of a doctor, as well on the account of the expence, as the notion, that when the doctor is called in, death is not far distant; so that trifling medicines and dressings are acquisitions to them, and of little expence to me; and you will not suspect me of carrying my charity so far as to look at their wounds when they have them, or exposing my own health to the danger of infection: I am content with the theory, though I can tell you I am in general so successful in my prescriptions, that my fame is very much known, and my skill as much depended on; but I am particularly now, when to every other blessing is added the company of my beloved

" Anna,

“ Anna, too sensible of my happiness, to
“ risk, by any wilful act of my own, a
“ change. Too good to me, and too
“ indulgent to all my hopes, the Al-
“ mighty disposer of my fate rendered
“ me thankful to heaven—I must now
“ expect some trials.”

Such were Mrs. Mansel's sentiments, and such her constant practice; her open hand, her giving heart, never retreated from the cries of distress; her charities were extended with liberality and feeling, yet they were governed by prudence; the infant and aged poor were most the objects of her regard; and by her proper management, and having nourishing things made at her own house, she contrived to compass every benevolent purpose at a trifling expence.

Formed under *her* eye, taught by *her* example, and impressed with *her* ideas, the heart of her pupil ever beat in unison with her own; Anna became the cheerful dispenser of charity; her youth and vivacity made the learning the Welch language easy

easy and useful; she soon became the interpreter of the poor to her maternal friend, and their intervals of time was filled by work, reading, or music, as in the happy days of Melmoth Lodge; nor where they entirely deprived of the pleasures of society, for the lawyer's lady, as well as those of the dissenting teacher, the doctor, and the exciseman, though too rude and uncultivated to give or receive, that delicate pleasure arising from the intercourse of refined sentiments and polite manners, yet spoke English, and, 'with a few substantial freeholders, were never weary of testifying their respect, and love for the rector and his family, nor ever so happy as when they had the pleasure of entertaining them, on those occasions the young people of the better sort were invited to join Anna, and a dance generally concluded the evening, in which the rector frequently joined.

The protection and kindness of Mrs. Mansel was not more salutary to our heroine, than comfortable to herself; she had indeed, whenever Mr. Mansel was called

called from home, found herself in a terrible solitude; but she had now a tenderly beloved companion with whom she could most delightfully converse, whose taste and sentiments exactly corresponded with her own whose lively disposition, untainted with levity, diverted and amused, while the goodness of her heart, and the sweetness of her temper, endeared her not only to her, but to the whole village.

Mrs. Mansel had, from the favours of different families in which she had lived, a large stock of all kind of cloaths; she was happy now to put them to use, and applied herself to the transforming them for her dear Anna, whose gratitude and pleasure, if we consider the effect new things have on young minds, may be supposed very great; but allowing for youth and pride all we may her satisfaction at receiving, was not nearly equal to that her friends felt in giving, constant proofs of unbounded affection.

When Mrs. Mansel had finished equipping her, she prepared her for the acquaintance,

ance of *one* lady, who, in that remote spot, she said, would do honour to a court; and having sent in the morning for permission, she took our heroine, after dinner, to visit Mrs. Herbert at Llandore Castle; in their way thither, the history of the family they were going to visit engrossed their conversation.

Mr. Herbert was a gentleman who could trace his pedigree nearly as long as his lady, which is saying a great deal; he married her in her nineteenth year, when in the bloom of beauty; she was the toast of the country.

Mr. Herbert was a jolly, handsome man, and at that time supposed to be so distractedly in love with Miss Martha Edwin, that if she had not consented to be united to him, he would have destroyed himself; he had a clear estate of two thousand pounds a year, his lady's fortune was five thousand pounds; but the iron works, left her by her grandmother, was a great addition to that sum, and Sir William

ham Edwin, her brother, gave them up the castle for their country residence.

Mr. Herbert hated London; they therefore spent their winters at Bath, where they had an elegant house.

In the first years of their marriage, they were blessed with several children, two only of whom were now living, a son, in his twenty first year, compleating his studies at Oxford, being designed for the bar, and a daughter of seventeen.

Mrs. Herbert was not so happy in her domestic circle as she deserved to be; her husband, from the most constant and passionate lover, and for a few years the kindest of husbands, thought proper to be weary of happiness.

His home grew insipid; his children, whose prattle was once his supreme delight, were now noisy; and his wife, whose soul and body was the assemblage of goodness and beauty, tired him with her sameness and insipidity.

Seduced by the false appearances of pleasure in the dissipated company he kept
at

at Bath, at a period when prudent men give up their follies, his commenced, and his amiable, sensible wife, had the anguish of seeing herself deserted for, and insulted by, almost every demirip who frequented the seat of gaiety; but those indulgencies cost him very dear. They impaired his constitution, and embarrassed his circumstances; air became necessary for one, but he wanted resolution to apply himself to the œconomy of the other.

He retired to Llandore, but for a time, vitiated habits are not to be conquered merely by a seclusion from company; from an intriguer in high life, Mr. Herbert condescended to become a seducer of innocence in low; the maids at the castle, in their turns, triumphed over their injured mistress; sometimes, indeed, the truant would return to a sense of duty, and, promise of amendment, but as those fits of penitence were sure to be succeeded by longer and more atrocious lapses; they in time ceased to be the object of his lady's wishes; and at last, after having
been

been long miserable, rendered her resentful, she, on his removing a maid (who waited on Miss Herbert) publicly from her service into elegant lodgings, left his bed.

Mr. Herbert was too full of his new amour, to pay any regard to this act of his wife; and his mistress being artful, handsome, and extravagant, retained her influence over him, to the entire ruin both of his peace and his fortune; and so much was he wrapped up in this woman, he could not bear an absence of any length. At this period of my history, he kept her in a hired house only six miles from the castle, where he constantly visited her, regardless of the ill-requited love, and mortified pride, of one of the most amiable women, whose fine sense, and elegant person, were despised and neglected; yet conscious worth and injured innocence inspired her with fortitude, and gave a dignity to her sufferings, that interested every heart but of him whom it most concerned.

When business called Mr. Herbert to London, Nichols only accompanied him; but Mrs. and Miss Herbert were of his party to Bath, where they spent six months out of the twelve.

Mrs. Herbert thus forced to seek in the resources of her own mind a consolation denied her in the tenderness of her husband, transferred her affection to her children; she adored her son, and doated on her daughter.

Miss Herbert was a lovely girl, whose pleasing form was animated by a soul replete with every sentiment of generosity, gentleness, and good nature; she saw with unutterable sorrow the affliction of her worthy mother, whom she loved with an enthusiastic fondness: it was the study of her life to blunt the keen edge of her parent's woe by every act of duty and unremitting attention; her temper was mild, forgiving; she had the innocence of the dove, without an atom of gall in her composition.

CHAPTER XXII.

Visits and Family Pictures.

TO ladies of the turn I have described those of Llandore Castle, it may be imagined the settlement of a sensible, well-bred woman, in the neighbourhood, was an acquisition. Mrs. Herbert, long sick of the unmeaning acquaintance with which the world abounds, received with pleasure to her friendship and confidence, the worthy Mrs. Mansel, nor was Mr. Mansel less a favourite with Mr. Herbert, who would not dine on Sunday without his benediction, charging him, however, to keep clear of his preachments, a hint Mr. Mansel had too much real piety always to observe, though he had the sorrow to see all arguments were ineffectual, and remonstrance unattended to by a man so vitiated, that

he was above the disguise of a decent appearance; indeed so abhorrent to his principles was the life of Mr. Herbert, that nothing but the respect and compassion he felt for the lady, would have prevailed on him to appear at their table.

Mrs. Mansel was now doubly welcome at Llandore on account of her young companion; she was introduced as a near relation of Mr. Mansel's, whose name, at their request, she went by; for as she had no natural right to that of Dalton, and as her assuming it was rather an act of necessity than choice, she readily changed it, not, however, till Mr. Dalton had given his permission, which was asked by Mrs. Mansel by letter.

There was on a visit at this time to Miss Herbert, a daughter of Sir William Edwin, Miss Cecilia Edwin, who was not immediately quite so gracious as her cousin with our heroine; but time so improved their acquaintance into mutual liking and regard, the young ladies and Anna became inseparable; and when a
short

short time after Miss Edwin left Llandore, and Anna by that means was Miss Herbert's only companion, her accomplishments rendered her society as improving as it was pleasing, and the graces both of her mind and person, endeared her to Mrs. Herbert, as well as her daughter. The summer passed imperceptibly, in one continued scene of tranquil happiness, which was a little interrupted in November, by the regret Anna felt at parting with her new friends, who at that time left Llandore. But though the refined pleasures of agreeable and polite conversation were, for the present, confined to the parsonage, the convivial festival of Christmas was not passed without its enjoyments; they paid and received the visits of hospitality, and the inhabitants of the village made up in friendship, good humour, and a desire to please, what they wanted in politeness, if, indeed, a sincere wish to render every kind office to those with whom we associate is not politeness in its truest sense. At other times, when the bleak winds and

deep snows, or more uncomfortable cold rains, made every trifling excursion fatiguing and dangerous from the warm cheery dwelling she was bid to call her own, still the hours were marked with fresh enjoyments; reading, working, and drawing, were changed with music; Mr. Mansel's flute often accompanied the sweet pipe of our heroine; their days were those of peace and happiness; their nights blessed with rest and tranquility.

Summer returned the valuable inhabitants of Llandore; the six months that had elapsed, had not been more favourable to the improvements of Anna's person than her mind; her avidity after learning increased with her opportunities; and Mrs. Herbert was too sensible of the benefit her daughter must receive from such a companion, not to detain her, as often as possible, at the castle. In the course of the summer, Miss Herbert was strongly pressed to go to Dennis Place, and take Miss Mansel with her. Miss Edwin assured her, her cousin, Lady Edwin was prepared to love
and

and admire her friend, and that she would be highly offended with both if they did not accept her invitation. The rector and his lady were equally loth to part with their niece, as Anna was called; nor was Mrs. Herbert willing to be separated from her daughter, but yet she was more loth to disoblige Cecilia, whose repeated intreaties at last prevailed on her, and her's on the Mansels, to let the young ladies go, Mrs. Mansel agreeing to spend the time they were gone wholly with Mrs. Herbert at Llandore. With many injunctions to take care of themselves, and as many to write often. Miss Herbert and our heroine were sent off in the chariot attended by one servant, and reached Dennis Place by their dinner hour, which was six o'clock; they were received with open arms by Cecilia, and with great politeness by the rest of the family, which consisted of Sir William, Lady Edwin, and Miss Winifred Edwin, a maiden sister of the Baronet. The son and heir of Dennis Place was then on his travels; the

open-hearted hospitality that regained in this spacious mansion, where the order, regularity, and cleanliness, could only be equalled by the plenty and liberality which was extended to all corners, was a scene perfectly new to Anna. The massy old plate, the large stud of fine horses, number of servants, with the magnificence of the furniture, and the elegance of their table, gave her ideas of opulence and grandeur, to which she was hitherto a stranger, and impressed on her mind a respect and wonder which every hour increased.

They were shewn to separate apartments, and had each an attendant consigned to them; a groom was likewise ordered to wait their commands with horses, whenever they chose to ride, and they had not been half an hour in the house before they found themselves perfectly at home.

When they retired, Miss Herbert asked her companion how she liked Dennis Place? it was impossible to dislike what exceeded all that *she* had conceived of elegance and grandeur; "If," said Miss Herbert, "you
" are

“are not sleepy, I will give you some
“anecdotes of this family, which will ac-
“count for the superiority of their ap-
“pearance over my mamma.”

This was very good, Anna told her, and she would venture to promise attention, if her obliging communication lasted the night; it was, indeed, gratifying a curiosity which arose in her mind the moment she saw the very great difference of circumstances in the brother and sister.

“It is not,” said Miss Herbert, “that
“my mamma’s first setting out in life, was
“inferior to her fortune or family, but
“my uncle’s, which was so superior, that
“occasioned the immense distance between
“them in point of circumstances: Lady
“Cecilia Edwin was one of the greatest
“fortunes in the principality; she fell in
“love with my uncle at Worcester music
“meeting. The old Earl, her father,
“having been very unfortunate in her
“twin brother, gave his sanction to her
“choice, as soon as he found my uncle’s
“was the best blood in our country, as

“ his was in his own; and at his death;
“ his great estate, as well as immense
“ personals, centered in Lady Edwin and
“ her family. My cousin, Hugh, is as
“ handsome as his father, but I am afraid
“ not quite so good; he is a year older
“ than my brother Charles; Cecilia, you
“ know, she is a very amiable girl, and de-
“ serves the riches she is entitled to; mam-
“ ma says, Lady Edwin is a noble spirited
“ woman; she is certainly very good;
“ but I know not how it is, I always feel
“ more inclined to fear than love her; I
“ hope it is not a breach of the duty I
“ owe my father, but I actually believe I
“ love my uncle better than I do him:
“ if you knew how kind he is to my
“ mamma, you would not wonder at my
“ attachment—Never, indeed, in that re-
“ spect was a happier woman; both Sir
“ William and Lady Edwin make her in-
“ terest theirs; and notwithstanding papa’s
“ imprudence, they certainly intended Ceci-
“ lia for my brother, but that is a secret:
“ indeed Lady Edwin is (lowering her
mild

“ mild voice to a whisper) as family mad
“ as her father was; she would almost
“ expire at the thought of either of her
“ children’s marrying into one, whose pedigree
“ did not reach as far as from
“ hence to Llandore.”

Anna could not help laughing at this innocent folly in her friend, who added,
“ yet mamma says, the finest young man
“ in the world was lost by this nonsense:”
After some remarks on the history she had communicated, they separated, as Miss Herbert lay with Cecilia—When they met in the morning, the stately air of Lady Cecilia, the sense of her high rank, and the value she set on good blood, in all which, Anna knew herself to be very deficient, gave her precisely Patty Herbert’s ideas: she felt much more inclined to fear than to love a person who appeared to carry nothing about her in common with the rest of the world but her form, and that, graceful as it was, rather overawed than pleased—A silent, formal breakfast gave place to an uninteresting conversation

versation between Lady Cecilia and the maiden Mrs. Winifred, on a person of the name of Trevannion (who pretended to be a distant relation to her ladyship's family) and having fallen into misfortunes, solicited relief—the roll was fetched, and the man (who was an artful beggar) examined; the account he gave was so lame, and as he was far from speaking the language of the country, he was on the point of being consigned to the discipline of the servants, when Lady Cecilia recollecting herself, solemnly asked if his name was really Trevannion? The man assuring her, trembling, it was—Well, then, said she, majestically turning from him, let him go; let his name be his protection—this affair, which had been examined and treated with great solemnity, ended—the young ladies withdrew to laugh over the prejudices of high blood, and Lady Edwin retired to her chamber, attended by Miss Winifred with the pedigree.

Lady

Lady Cecilia Edwin is by this time, I am afraid, no favourite of my reader; I must therefore, in justice to her, enlarge on a character, not, I confess, introduced in the most amiable colours, but which had so many bright lines to set off this one dark shade, that I am at a loss with which to begin.

Lady Cecilia Edwin was, as Miss Herbert informed Anna, the only daughter of the Earl of Trevannion, a nobleman so strictly attached to his country, that he never but once in his life left it, to visit the court of London, and that was on the marriage of the then Prince of Wales—He was descended in a regular line from Llewelin, Prince of South Wales, and every marriage and intermarriage in his line of ancestry, were among the descendants of some or other of the ancient Cambrian heroes—This family pride descended to his daughter; but it was not the only thing she derived from her father; a firm undaunted mind, which shrunk not from its own sorrows, while it diffused

con-

consolation and relief to those of other people; a benevolent spirit; a soul that scorned an act of meanness; a princely rewarder of merit; a general benefactor to the needy; disinterested and generous; all those was the Earl of Trevannion, and all these was his daughter—A deviation from the pride of ancestry in his son, had totally alienated his affections; but in the disposition of his fortune, he did not suffer himself to be prejudiced by his anger; had Lord Trevannion lived, though banished from his father's love, he would have experienced his justice.

Sir William Edwin, so happily distinguished by the noble heiress, was of ancient, and nearly as honourable a family as the Trevannions; riches were trash, acres dirt, to that one consideration—it gave him the advantage of Dukes, who were suitors to Lady Cecilia, in the eyes of both father and daughter; in those of the latter, a very fine person, was, perhaps, no small addition to the respect due to his genealogy.

Lady

Lady Edwin was so tenacious of her family dignity, of which she considered herself the only support till her son was established in the world; that the value she set on her high birth, appeared to those who did not perfectly know her, to favour not a little of vanity and ostentation; and her charities, which were universal, seemed more the result of pride than that blessed spirit which taught her to feel for the wretched, who never applied to her in vain—grief and affliction from whatever country it came, found in her the source of comfort and relief; but in other matters, her servants, her tradesmen, even her cattle must be Welch; nay, so attached was she to the Cambrian stream in her veins, she would, as she often declared, rather have chosen to marry her children to the peasant of her own wild hills, than to nobles of any other country—on this principle it was, that she consented to give her daughter to Charles Herbert; and on this principle Sir William and herself had contracted their son

to an only daughter of their next neighbour, though Miss Tourbville had indeed other attractions, being an heiress in her own right to twelve hundred a year, and great personals, her parents both dying before she reached her teens—Her guardian, who lived in Dorsetshire, knowing the intended alliance, placed this young lady, at her own request, at the same school with Miss Edwin, between whom and her there existed great friendship and affection—To finish the character of Lady Edwin, I must add, she was a fond wife and a good mother; very warm in her friendships, but vindictive in her resentments, which were not easily excited on any other occasion than an insult offered to her family.

Sir William was, as I have said, very handsome; he was perfectly good humoured and friendly in his disposition; loved hunting above all things but his children; his bottle next; and sorry I am to name her, after so many rivals, his lady last: indeed his passions were never greatly interested in her favour, nevertheless he

re-

respected and shewed her the utmost attention on all occasions, leaving to her management her estate as well as his own, calling on her for what money he chose to expend; for, as she had brought him such a noble fortune, he thought it but just, she should dispose of it as she best liked—Her generosity rewarded his confidence; his will was hers; and Mrs. Herbert's family she considered as her own—Sir William was very fond of his sister; he knew her husband was imprudent by her frequent applications to him for money; but had no suspicion it was for such prostituted purposes.

He was by inheritance from father to son, knight of the shire; and so well was he beloved, that his name carried the numbers for the town and county where Dennis Place stood—Though urged very much, he would not give up his seat for his own shire, many, very many, felt the philanthropy of his soul. Though no person living (the prime minister for the
time

time being excepted,) ever found an enemy in Sir William Edwin, he was a constant railer at taxes; not because he paid them, but because his friends did; the country party was sure of *him*.

While the tenants of every estate round him had their rents raised, his grew affluent at their old prices; hence gratitude induced those who had leases, and interest those who had not, to keep in perfect order and repair their several domains; their stock not being obliged to be parted with, at the requisition of a needy or cruel landlord, were numerous and thriving, and the brow of contented, chearful industry, graced the door of every farm and cottage on their estate—Lady Edwin settled her steward's accounts weekly; no tradesman or artificer were suffered to leave the house without prompt payment of their bills: their acts of benevolence were no less well-timed than general, though from the decent circumstances every poor or labouring person must be
in

in who dwelt in the vicinity of such a house, calls of charity were very few.

Miss Winifred Edwin was, solely against her will, a maiden of forty; but though she had found herself disappointed, in a deep-laid matrimonial scheme, by the marriage of Mr. Mansel, who with great respect declined her offered hand, pleading his engagement, as his excuse for not accepting so great an honour, was yet the best-tempered creature breathing; her ill success, injuring neither her natural good humour, or putting her out of hopes of better luck another time: she was, as indeed all the Edwins were, of a most friendly disposition, and never so happy as when up to her ears in business; so that Miss Winifred was employed, it mattered not in what.

She was the arranger of all the love quarrels in the house; the confidant of the maids, and on all occasions of false hearts and broken vows, the terror of the men—She was sole mistress when Lady Cecilia

Cecilia was in town, and her right hand when in the country: as she could tell off hand every blot on the ancestry of all the old families in the principality, holding in infinite contempt, as upstarts, those who she could trace their parentage no farther than three or four hundred years: and as to people who had purchased or accidentally settled in the neighbourhood, she never recollected their names, or saw them, though she was obliged to turn out of their way in the road. To oblige Lady Cecilia, she at first made genealogy her study, and her proficiency as well as prejudices originating with that lady, it is no wonder, on a theme in which they both delighted, so much of their time was spent: the subject was as regularly served up as the breakfast.

Miss Cecilia Edwin was a fine, tall, brown girl, bred up at a capital boarding school in London, where, as she never knew what it was to form a wish for any thing money could purchase, without having it immediately gratified; the value of that
article

article was the last thing she could possibly learn.

She was very deep read in heroic novels ; the governess, indeed, did not allow those warm improvements in the minds of her young ladies, but as in the educating our females of rank, they much oftener meet with Madam Frajans than Mrs. Barlows, the teachers were not quite so nice ; besides, it was impossible to refuse young ladies any indulgence who were continually making them presents, which the two destined sisters always had it in their power to do.

The fine feelings and sentiments, therefore, of those heroines, who generally at the age of fifteen or sixteen,

“ All the turns of love’s soft passion know.”

and who preferred the gratification of that divine impulse to any earthly thing were the favourite topics of Cecilia’s conversation ; and a journey to Scotland, with some dear unfortunate, her ambition. To keep her in credit with herself, it was necessary she should

should be miserable: her lively black eyes were taught to languish; her bosom to heave the gentle sigh; the down-cast look and soft melancholy were assumed, in direct contradiction to a ruddy animated complexion, and a very fine flow of spirits; indeed, one difficulty, which it was cruel she should have to encounter was, that of not having yet been addressed at all: and how can a young novelist be wretched alone?—A partner must be found for the pleasing misery.

In the circle of her acquaintance she knew of none half so amiable, so attentive, so accomplished, as her cousin Charles; and not having any suspicion of her mother's intention to form a union between them (as the sanction of her parents would have spoiled the whole matter) she generously determined *be* should be the hero of her adventures.—In the correspondence she carried on in a series of original letters, with a few of her sweet young friends, she was indeed particularly frank and communicative

municative, in her account of the rise and progress, of this amour; relating distress she was a stranger to, circumstances that never happened, and vows of love which existed only in her own heated imagination and profound reading.

Few young men visited at Dennis Place but were set down by her as unhappy lovers; they were amiable; she could approve them as friends; but, alas! her heart was bound to one dear object, in bonds, which nothing but death could dissolve.

Our heroine was soon one of the confidants of Cecilia; and Miss Herbert not having had so liberal an education, could not possibly conceive a passion so well expressed could be imaginary—She believed her brother tenderly beloved by Cecilia, but had sometimes a secret doubt, whether she did not rather flatter her own wishes in her ideas of his return—He was to spend the vacation there, and she resolved to be a close observer; though a deli-

delicate regard for the pride of her cousin, forbid her dropping a hint of those doubts even to Anna, who, on her part, concluded Mr. Charles Herbert and Cecilia Edwin to be a very faithful pair of lovers.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

